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DIRECTORATE OF YOUTH AND SPORT

## Hearing on the specific situation of young migrants

### Summary Proceedings



European Youth Centre Budapest  
15-16 November 2001



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# **Hearing on the specific situation of young migrants**

*Summary of Proceedings*

*European Youth Centre Budapest  
15–16 November 2001*

*“I think that we had a unique event, where two groups of people met, young people and parliamentarians, who do not often meet. It was a great opportunity and we shared ideas, different realities and proposals on such an important issue as the situation of young migrants in Europe.”*

*A young person attending the hearing*

*“One of my colleagues said: “We need more public spirited people.” I really like that term. And I hope that we will all become – at least we who attended this conference – more public spirited people and we will also teach others to become so.”*

*A parliamentarian attending the hearing*

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## CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	5
I. OPENING.....	6
II. WELCOME SPEECHES .....	8
III. EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE HEARING.....	14
IV. PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION OF YOUNG MIGRANTS ..	18
V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	25
VI. RACISM, VIOLENCE, INTOLERANCE AND TERRORISM.....	32
VII. TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEINGS.....	41
VIII. THE SPECIFIC SITUATION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS ..	52
IX. CONCLUSIONS .....	60
X. CLOSING REMARKS .....	65
XI. APPENDICES .....	68

## PREFACE

*Two fundamental convictions lied behind the Hearing on the specific situation of young migrants: first of all that young people in Europe should be fully involved in building the future of European society; secondly that migrants, regardless of their origin, had a valuable contribution to make in debating those matters of concern to them and therefore to society at large.*

*For these reasons the Sub-Committee on Migration of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography and the European Youth Centre of Budapest organised a pan-European debate involving 35 young people, coming from 27 different European countries and having first-hand knowledge or personal experience of migration, along with Parliamentarians and representatives of international organisations involved in this field.*

*The very idea of organising such a hearing was innovative: the gathering was the first of its kind in the field of migration within the Council of Europe. The issues that were discussed were the most important in national and international agendas, such as participation and integration in society, education and training, the situation of unaccompanied minors and trafficking.*

*The Hearing did not fail to live up to expectations. The discussion was lively and intense and both groups contributed with their own style and approach. There was an exchange of points of view, of personal experiences, concerns and hopes.*

*Parliamentarians and young people worked together throughout the Hearing. The main results of their work will be included in a report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography to be presented to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in January 2003.*

*Let me conclude by thanking all the participants for their valuable contributions.*



*Mr. Tadeusz Iwiński, Chairman*

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2001**

## **I. OPENING**

*Co-chaired by*

*Mr. John CONNOR (Ireland), Chair of the Sub-committee on Migration  
and*

*Ms. Antje ROTHEMUND, Executive Director, European Youth Centre  
Budapest*

### **Co-chair Mr. CONNOR**

Good morning. My name is John Connor, I am a member of the Irish parliament and chairman of the migration sub-committee, which is a sub-committee of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the Council of Europe. It is my great pleasure, and my privilege too, to welcome you all here to this hearing on the specific situation of young migrants in Europe. I would particularly like to thank Dr Tamás Deutsch, Minister of State for Youth and Sport of Hungary for joining us here today. As a politician I know how difficult it is to find time when your diary is so full of commitments, so we are particularly grateful for your coming here today. We know how difficult it is to prioritise amongst all your tasks and all the events that you are asked to attend: so your presence here is a clear sign of the importance that you attach to this event and above all to the problems affecting young people in today's society; so I say again, thank you indeed for coming. Tomorrow we will have the honour of having your colleague here, Dr Sándor Pintér, Minister of the Interior of Hungary, who will take part to the closing of this hearing. I would like to thank the Directorate of Youth and Sport in the person of its Director, Mr. Mírio Martins, over here on my right; and the European Youth Centre Budapest and its Executive Director, Ms. Antje Rothemund for hosting this hearing, and for their contribution to the very large organisational effort that is behind the staging of this event. Most of all I would like to thank all the young people who have volunteered to participate in this hearing. In these two days we will be talking about the specific situation of young migrants, with young migrants. I am sure that we will learn a lot from you and I hope that we will be able to translate what we learn here into political action within the Council of Europe and within our own national parliaments.

We do meet at an important moment. After the events of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, I feel that members of parliament and civil society have to meet and discuss in a very concrete way what the priorities are, and what they should be, in the field of migration. It is a critical moment indeed for all of us who advocate and work for humane migration policies that are fully respectful of human rights. I share the fear expressed by many that after the events of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September public opinion may perceive migrants and refugees as potential criminals, especially when they come from different religions and different ethnic backgrounds. Likewise, I share the concern that, whilst pursuing the legitimate purpose of preventing and combating terrorism, states may adopt unduly restrictive legislative and administrative measures affecting migrants that have nothing to do with terrorist activities.

I believe that this is the right moment for parliamentarians to meet with young people, who represent an important part of civil society, and who will be the decision makers of tomorrow. It is also an opportunity for young people to express their thoughts, fears and expectations to their elected representatives: in a nutshell, to make their voices heard on an equal footing. Thirty-five young people have come here today from twenty seven different European countries: all have first-hand knowledge or experience of migration issues, and they are here

to take part in the hearing along with parliamentarians and representatives of international organisations in this field. In these two days we will work together as Rapporteurs, chairpersons, speakers or members of discussion panels, debating issues that are high on the agenda of states and international agencies. These issues include: participation and integration of young migrants; education and training; the situation of unaccompanied minors; trafficking, racism, violence, intolerance and terrorism. At the end of the hearing a group of Rapporteurs will summarise the main findings that at a later stage will be included in a report of the Committee that will be presented to the full Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. I hope that, working together, we will be able to elaborate concrete proposals for new pan-European political initiatives regarding young migrants on this continent of Europe.

### **Co-chair Ms. ROTHEMUND**

Minister, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, dear colleagues: personally and on behalf of the European Youth Centre Budapest and the Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe, I would like to wish you all a very warm welcome here to this hearing, to this activity and to this place, which is so far the only permanent service of the Council of Europe in a country of Central and Eastern Europe. For us it is a great honour and a great pleasure that the Committee has chosen the European Youth Centre in Budapest as a venue and that we are able to welcome this event here; we will do everything to make this activity as successful as we wish it to be.

It is a challenging activity that you have initiated: not only because its subject, the situation of young migrants in Europe, is a very complex topic, but also because of the methodology that has been chosen for this hearing. To bring together two very different working cultures, that of the Parliamentary Assembly and that of the youth representatives, is in my opinion a very exciting venture, and I am very happy to see that so many members of the Committee have joined us in this venture and will stay with us for the next two days. The invitation to this event says that there will be parliamentarians and youth representatives. The youth representatives present here not only come from very different countries, they also come from different social and economic environments, and they also have a different role to play as regards the work they do in the minority and migration sector. Some of them are coming into contact with the Council of Europe for the first time; others have a couple of years of experience in working with us; most of them are volunteers, so they engage themselves in their free time, quite enthusiastically and with a great commitment to the questions which may lead to improvement in the situation of young migrants in Europe. For the Directorate of Youth and Sport, this hearing is an important element in our human rights education youth programme.

Part of the philosophy of this Centre is its residential character, so we are happy to see that many of you have chosen to stay here. By residential character I mean that people work and live in the same place: it is often said that the best discussions take place in the coffee breaks. Here at the European Youth Centre Budapest we add to the coffee breaks by including also the evenings and the breakfast, dinner and lunch – time to create a framework for exchange outside the plenary room, and I hope that this possibility will be exploited to the full during these two days. I hope that this event would be a possibility to start a dialogue, that this co-operation will continue over the next couple of years and that this event will be the foundation stone for the expected results. I wish this event much success and I thank you very much for your attention.

## II. WELCOME SPEECHES

### **Dr Tamás Deutsch, Minister of Youth and Sport, Hungary**

With the greatest respect may I first of all extend a heart-felt welcome to all of you, in the hope that in debating the issues related to youth migration we may achieve solutions for resolving these problems. Ladies and gentlemen, let me refer to two experiences of my countrymen's which have been continuing through generations, and which I think will strongly determine the migration policy of the Republic of Hungary in the 21st century. Allow me to quote a poem: "I try to be as small as possible, I will become a small point at the cross roads of old and new home lands ." This poem was written by a famous Hungarian poet who had been forced to emigrate. The poem represents the insecurity of a person trying to find a new place of his own. So, in the century that we have just left behind we Hungarians have had a common experience at the hands of history: hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens, along with their families, had to leave their homeland; and in many cases they had to look for a new country, a new home where they struggled to make ends meet and even just to be able to survive. The most recent example was after 1956, but similar things had occurred previously, particularly following the Second World War.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Hungarian nation and Hungarian society has intimate experience of the sort of political, economic, social and cultural problems that still continue to force people and families all over the world to leave their homelands in the search for happiness, that force people to leave their homes and look for a new country in which to live. Equally, however, Hungary has a thousand years of experience of inviting and accepting people from outside. Last year the Hungarian state celebrated its thousandth anniversary: we were celebrating a joint millennium. Probably you already know that St Stephen, the founder of our state, in the last decade of his reign counselled his son about the responsibilities involved in governing the newly established state. Let me quote a line of what he said. "The king should behave justly in all his activities; he should show patience, he should benevolently accept guests, and he should also look after them in a charitable way." So, ladies and gentlemen, this is Hungary's experience, from a thousand year's of history, of the situation faced by those who have left their homes and their countries to seek a new home for themselves and their families, in

Hungary. Putting things into the perspective of the contemporary principles and situations of the 21st century, it is a deeply rooted tradition for us to respect the rights of migrants coming into Europe, but we are also looking for partners in order to help those who come to our country; it is quite natural for us that the improvement of the situation of individuals and families should be achieved in a context of international understanding.

*Migrants should be involved in everything that concerns them.*

*A young participant*

Ladies and gentlemen, we are convinced that there is a panacea to voluntary but also to forced migration, and this is nothing but, no matter how sentimental it might sound, that everybody should get all that is necessary for a happy life in his or her homeland so that his or her family, community, social, cultural, educational and political needs can be met so that he or she can lead a full and happy life. And now you will hear my last quote, a wonderful quote from a poem written by a Transylvanian writer: "We are here in this world so that somewhere we may find our home." So maybe it is not an exaggeration on my side if I reinterpret this sentence a little, to say that we are here in this world so that we should feel at home in our homeland, a homeland which is not only a physical attachment but also a moral and emotional attachment. This principle, this conviction is what led the Hungarian parliament a couple of months ago to pass an act relating to Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary and the opportunities

open to them. It is by reference to this conviction that we have sought to contribute to the opportunities and possibilities, and to improve the circumstances of the people living in the Carpathian basin, outside the borders of the Republic of Hungary, who consider themselves to belong to the Hungarian nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me to address certain migration issues of the 20th and the 21st centuries, in particular two issues that are very closely related to this conference. Firstly, based on the data provided by international organisations, the number of female migrants has increased during the last decade: these show that today more than half of migrants are women, and as noted in Council of Europe documents this shows a 'feminisation' of migration, in itself a problem raising distinct questions. I think that, during this two-day long conference, this is an issue, which should be touched upon, with special regard being paid to the framework of the three-year human rights project of the Council of Europe that was organised in Hungary and has been widely publicised. Secondly, I would like to remind you of another issue, namely that based on the experience of the last two or three decades, the problem of the growing number of those arriving in a foreign country alone, without families or parents – as experts put it the "mobile young migrants" – is one which is receiving increasing attention and which also casts a special light on the issue of young migrants.



Let me talk a little about the Hungarian experience of migration. Hungary, during the last decade, from the point of view of migration has been a receiving country. As compared with 1997, that is over a period of three, three and a half years ago, the number of those who wanted to come into Hungary had increased by 70% in the year 2000. And of those who filed an immigration application, 13% were below 14 years of age, and an additional 4% were below 18 years of age, including both boys and girls. All this suggests that of those who file an immigration application to Hungary, every fifth person is below the age of 18; and as we all know that being a young person is not only a problem of age, but also a problem of how one feels in oneself. So it is not only those who file these immigration applications, of whom as I said every fifth one is below the age of 18; one could say that a third of applicants fall within a group which might be described as "young".

Last but not least, may I say a few words about the ministry of which I am head, the Ministry of Youth and Sports which, in line with the Ministry of the Interior, over the last three years has mobilised extensive funding to support various national and international projects intended to help young migrants to integrate themselves in the country, and also to impart to them the skills necessary to achieve that aim. On that issue, let me highlight what I consider to be the most important aspect for central and eastern Europe as it leaves the Communist era behind us. Over the last ten years, the culture of voluntary or non-governmental activity has not developed to the extent that can be seen in western Europe or in North America. Nevertheless we are absolutely convinced that it is not only the State's intervention and the strengthening of the institutional system, but also the non-governmental organisations' capabilities which should be expanded, because by that much could be achieved and a great deal contributed to solving and improving numerous social problems. That is why we re putting a strong emphasis on ensuring that we support and strengthen the activities of non-governmental organisations, and support and subsidise certain voluntary activities. By this we hope to involve contemporary Hungarian youth in a programme of work by which we may establish a strong NGO system in Hungary; and in achieving that, we would also like to improve the respect accorded to voluntary work. We would also like to help these young

people in experiencing in their everyday life the interaction of different cultures, and coming to appreciate the importance of people with different roots, and different thoughts and philosophies working together; therefore we are investigating the most suitable options for such programmes of co-operative work.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to tell you that it is a great honour for us that this conference is being held in Budapest. We are especially delighted that attending this conference we have, in addition to the representatives of local and international organisations, the representatives of youth organisation, appearing as partners of equal status in contributing to this thinking process. This further reinforces our conviction that we are following the most productive route when we plan our governmental work to involve both NGOs and Hungarian youth organisation as vitally important partners; and so I am convinced that the findings of your conference will also help to improve the practices and policies of Hungary, with regard to finding solutions for the problems young migrants. Now I would like to wish the best of luck in your work over the next two days of this conference, and I hope that you enjoy Hungary not only from the elevation of this conference hall, but also from ground level at which, as can be seen, Hungary is such a beautiful country.

**Mr. Mário MARTINS, Director, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe**

Thank you Mr Chairman. Minister, Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: I took up my functions as Director of Youth and Sport in the Council of Europe only two and a half months ago, and this is my first occasion on which to thank the Hungarian authorities, in the person of the minister, for all the help they have given the Council of Europe in the creation of this centre here in Budapest and for the continuing support they provide to our activities.

Let me start my short speech by referring to an interview that the former Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs gave to a French newspaper last week. Mr. Geremek gave, in a nutshell, the following message: "Europe is facing an important demographic deficit. This demographic deficit means that international migration will be necessary to ensure the social and economic health of Europe in the years ahead. This migration will, to a large extent, originate from outside Europe, from areas with different cultural and political traditions." And, Mr. Geremek concluded, potential difficulties should be researched and appropriate measures should be taken so that Europe welcomes these migrants on good terms. What Mr. Geremek said, was calling very much for an internationally harmonised migration policy. This policy should take into account economic and social imperatives, but also should take into account the human dignity of migrants. It is obvious that this policy can only be developed through closer co-operation between the countries of origin of migrants and the host countries.

But let me introduce a second dimension: Europe's demographic deficit also entails the ageing of the population. Because of this, the traditional inter-generational partnership and solidarity is weakening. Things like unemployment, the financing of pensions and social security are at the forefront of the concern of large sections of the European population. As a result of all these problems, and there are many other problems as well, there is a kind of "Euro-pessimism," and this kind of Euro-pessimism can easily reach proportions well beyond the rational. Young people are often seen as a source of problems, as a source of urban insecurity relating to drug use and abuse, and young people are to a large extent seen only as a target group for policies rather than as an asset for the future vitalities of our societies. I have taken up my functions, as I said to you, only two and a half months ago, but much of what I have heard during that time concerns the urgent need to solve the problems relating to urban insecurity related to youth; for instance, that the problems of drug abuse in youth are getting

out of hand. So there is a tendency to see youth only as a source of problems, and I think it is important that we fight this negative approach to youth.

It is obvious that in this context, where migrants are seen to a certain extent as a problem, and where youth is seen to a certain extent as a problem, young migrants risk very much drawing the short straw, being seen as a problem both as migrants and as youth. But as Mr. Geremek said, large-scale international migration to Europe is both unavoidable and necessary, and as the minister just reminded us, a large part of this migrant population is made up of young people. So, to prove wrong the prophets of gloom, a positive action-orientated approach is required, and it is clear that the active involvement of young people, of young migrants in particular, in the search for adequate solutions is necessary.

So, I very much welcome the initiative taken by the Parliamentary Assembly, and by the Sub-committee on Migration, to start this dialogue with young people and with young migrants in particular. And this initiative is all the more timely because the Committee on Education and Culture and its Sub-committee on Youth of the Parliamentary Assembly has decided last September to start preparations of a report on youth policy in Europe which will be submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly next June. So initiatives like the one you have taken today can be a helpful contribution to the report that the Parliamentary Assembly will approve next June.

The contributions made by the young migrants who are represented here and by the other representatives of the youth organisations and networks will, no doubt, add practical and first-hand experience to the work of the Parliamentary Assembly in this context. The themes for the discussions today and tomorrow are to a certain extent very general, and can apply to all sections both of the population and of the migrant population. But one has to recognise that it is in particular young migrants who are concerned by xenophobia and discrimination, which manifest themselves in many different forms but are being expressed with increasing violence. They are also concerned by a lack of access to training and education possibilities. They are concerned by obstacles to mobility, in a European labour market, which often demands mobility as a qualification for professional development. They are faced with problems and obstacles to participating actively in the construction of the civil society in which they live, and in the functioning of the democratic institutions of the states where they have made their lives.

Finally, one should not forget that a substantial proportion of migration nowadays is illegal, and that trafficking particularly concerns many young women. The situation of young migrants has for a number of years been central to the Council of Europe's youth policy. We help youth leaders to formulate their interests and to describe the problems they face. We provide them with training, the aim of which is to develop youth projects run by and for young people; to break the isolation of migrants in social environments; to create competences and structures for their active participation in civil society. In other words, we try to help them to become active citizens in the states in which they have chosen or are forced to live. A number of European youth organisations were created as a result of our past activities: I remember, for example, the campaign we ran six years ago, called "All Different, All Equal," and a number of people represented here today come from organisations which result from those past activities.

2002 will be a very important year for the Council of Europe youth sector. I often say that thirty plus three equals 2002. This is not because I do not know arithmetic, but because there



is a meaning to this formula: the youth sector in the Council of Europe will have been created thirty years ago, and our three annual priorities will come to an end also in 2002. So in 2002 we will have a ministerial conference in Thessalonica in Greece, where we will be looking at what we have achieved in the past and what will be our priorities in the years ahead. And again, contributions such as this one will help us to define those future priorities. One of the programmes, which will come provisionally to an end in 2002, is the human rights education programme, which has been mainly conducted from this youth centre here in Budapest. The year 2002 will be the year of synergies in which many activities will be organised in co-operation with national authorities in member states. It will be the year where, in this particular field, the Council of Europe will go national and local. And of course, we need the co-operation not only of the youth organisations, of youth networks, but also of parliaments, to make this programme a success and to open prospects for its development in the years ahead. So I hope very much that this hearing will provide us with food for thought, both to the Parliamentary Assembly and to the youth sector, in determining our priorities for the years ahead. I thank you very much for your attention and I wish you well for your meeting. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Mariam YASSIN, *Young Women from Minorities***

Good morning. My name is Mariam Yassin, and I am one of those young migrants living in Europe who had emigrated from their countries of origin for different reasons. Actually, I left Somalia ten years ago because of the civil war and I went to Italy to join the rest of my family, and I currently live in Italy. It is a great honour for me to represent Young Women From Minorities in this hearing and I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. WFM is a volunteer European non-governmental youth organisation created out of a pilot project set up during the Council of Europe youth campaign “All Different, All Equal”. Our main aim is to bring together and promote the work undertaken by and for minority women’s projects in Europe. It is my pleasure to participate in this activity on the specific situation of young migrants, which is important for young people generally and for our organisation in particular.

Actually, I prefer to speak about ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrants’ rather than about ‘immigration.’

Once, a friend from Torino told me that in fact she doesn’t like to use this word: in her opinion immigration does not exist; migrants are individuals who are there, in a country. And I fully agree with her. I do believe that, behind every movement of people, there are different stories and reasons. It is important to focus on the people, the protagonists of these movements, rather than on the phenomenon “immigration.” In fact I think that the word ‘migrant’ defines my situation very well, and maybe that of other young migrants as well. I emigrated, so I left my country, but I am still on a journey, and I am still looking for my last destination, Africa or Europe or Asia.

Today Europe is where people from different cultures and backgrounds are coming to live together, so it is important to address the issue of migrants and their specific situation. And in Europe there are thousands and thousands, there are no statistics on it, but it is estimated that 12 million young people were born and raised in societies to which their parents did not belong. These young people are raised in European societies, but are still considered as immigrants: and so I ask myself, “How long do I have to live in a country before I am considered as a citizen?” Young migrants have the same hopes,

aspirations, dreams and needs as other young people, and young migrants are always asked to integrate into the society they are living in, but I believe that there are obstacles or challenges to achieving these various ends. How many of you who, like me, look different, are stopped in the airport and searched and asked a hundred questions about where they are coming from, about their passports, their country and so on? Just yesterday, in a long queue – believe me – I was the only one stopped, for half an hour, whilst they looked through my passport asking me a hundred questions. Intolerance, prejudice and all forms of discrimination are part of the daily lives of many young migrant minority people around Europe, and this is a big challenge to their ability to participate in and their feelings of belonging to the countries in which they are living. How often are young migrants asked by the society to integrate, but then not given the instruments to do it? One challenge faced by young migrants, especially women, is the demand from the majority society to be modern and free, whilst at the same time they are asked to carry on the traditions and culture of their parents. But why, as one of our colleagues says, is it not possible to be Roma and Finnish at the same time? Why can I not be Italian and Muslim, for example? Or why not only Mariam?

Young migrants should be seen as resources and capable of belonging to different cultures, not as a burden. We can talk about challenges and difficulties, we can analyse different situations, but we have to go beyond that and see how we can overcome these challenges. I do believe that the solution is not one single thing, it is many, and it is only by co-operation that we can improve the situation. For such as this are an example of where representatives from different institutions, organisations, governments and NGOs are focussing on the improvement of young migrants’ situations. Minorities cannot isolate themselves, they cannot improve their situation if it is not in co-operation with the social majority, and this co-operation should take place in societies characterised by mutual respect and equality. Black or white, migrant or not, we are the generation who will create a pluralistic society in the European house, with mutual respect and equal rights.

*Nowadays we have started to divide people in categories, including the migrant category. In my opinion the word migrant should be crossed out and we should start calling them simply 'people'. We should give people the same rights no matter what religion or nationality they are. The emphasis should be put on the rights of human beings, not of migrants.*

*A parliamentarian*



### III. EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE HEARING

On the morning of the first day of the hearing all participants were asked to write on a piece of paper their main expectations of the hearing. The results were displayed in the meeting room allowing participants to read one another's expectations. In this spirit, the discussion commenced.

#### *I AM PARLIAMENTARIAN AND I EXPECT FROM THIS HEARING.....*

- I expect to hear from young people what kind of problems they are facing, how they see them, and how they would solve them. Their experience and ideas should be taken into account in problem solving and also when preparing and working on relevant legislation*
- Can be young migrants integrated?*
- I want to hear solutions to reduce racism*
- New ideas to reconcile the extension and further development of the principle of freedom of movement with nationalities, trend to "preserve their identity"*
- I would like to find out why young people want to migrate from their country*
- I would like to hear what other people think about migration issues, speak and exchange with others. How we help each other?*
- I would like to know more about the achievements of the various organisations represented in the meeting*
- As a British MP and Council of Europe Rapporteur I would welcome suggestions from participants in the hearing relating to the situation of young migrants and refugee problems*
- I expect to get more information about following subjects: how do the different European countries treat young migrants; legal background (in the countries); contributions to anti-racism work; expectations to the Council of Europe (point of view of the representatives of youth)*
- I hope we Parliamentarians will take the points raised by youth representatives seriously so that we can progress in building bridges between people!*
- I expect a fruitful discussion with the participants on the very important issues raised at this hearing*
- I feel confident that we all will learn more about the problems we are facing!*
- To exchange information and experience*
- To formulate practical policies and recommendations*
- As a result of this meeting I expect from the Council of Europe the elaboration of a policy towards the young migrants firstly from Ukraine, Russian Federation and other Eastern European countries; practical advices from national parliaments of Western Europe to be tolerant and assist all Europeans in living with dignity and in harmony. New meetings and acquaintances. Meeting with old good friends members of the Assembly of the Council of Europe.*
- I expect from our work: 1. To prepare a resolution on the problems of youth emigration; 2. to distribute it to all parliaments of Europe and the Council of Europe.*
- I hope to learn about the young people's opinion on the relevance or irrelevance of national identity*

- I would like to get ideas and complementary means for the prevention of human trafficking and forced prostitution*
- I want to listen to the youth organisations' perception on political action*
- Is it more important to integrate or to safeguard one's original culture and religion?*
- A move towards the construction of an educated pluralist society in respect of equality.*
- I expect that the young friends will be satisfied with the outcome of the meeting which will be securing their future in the field of the integration of immigrants*
- I expect that this innovative and rich experience will be repeated. It is essential to meet young people and those active in NGOs.*
- I hope that based on our exchange we could undertake and succeed an awareness raising campaign in our countries on migration issues and convince people that migration is just a fact. We need a lot of courage and understanding.*

#### *I AM A YOUNG PERSON AND I EXPECT FROM THIS HEARING.....*

- To come in closer contact with young migrants like me and see how migrating has effected them; discuss with Parliamentarians various aspects. Not because they are not aware of them but to have a hands-on and face-to-face discussion which produces better results*
- Solutions for refugees must be durable, otherwise there cannot be solutions*
- To learn something about migrants and refugees in other countries, because I do know so many migrants and refugees because I am myself a war refugee*
- Make new contacts and build links between our organisations*
- I expect that I will be able to get new information on migrants' experience from members of foreign organisations. From my side I can provide information about working with migrant students in my organisation*
- Information, education, experience*
- I expect an opportunity to get some suggestions on how Europe can advance in finding durable solutions to these problems*
- To draw the attention of parliamentarians towards the situation of migrants in the youth perspective*
- To learn more about young migrants and their problems*
- I expect concrete ideas of what the Committee on migration would propose for the future after the hearing; positive results*
- I wish to know how we can deal with the problems of young migrants*
- We need to understand other cultures and religions and avoid misconceptions. I think it is the basis of integration*
- Sharing experiences; to influence the policy makers; get a collective knowledge about migrants across Europe; having new contacts; future cooperation*
- Exchange experiences*



- I hope to give the parliamentarians more knowledge and may be even concrete ideas on how to develop the efforts and focus on some of the severe obstacles for young migrants around Europe today!
- As a young person I hope this meeting will make several suggestions (real suggestions!) to solve young migrants' problems
- To hear about the conditions of young migrants in other countries
- I hope that in the end of this meeting we migrants can have the chance to choose... have the chance to be only a someone that came from another country or to be treated as a European person.
- Reality based migration policies from EU
- I expect to hear clarifications and definitions for the words migrants, immigrants and internally displaced person. Do they mean the same?
- I would like to have better insight and knowledge about the immigration "problem" in Europe
- To gain deeper knowledge and experience
- Finding new friends from all over the world
- To work out a strategy to foster the adaptation of immigrants to the 'new' society
- I expect to meet MP's and discuss a big variety of issues formally or at coffee-breaks
- To create a fruitful beginning in the common work of young people and parliamentarians
- To establish good relations with other youth representatives; to know more about the European Youth Centre's activities; to share ideas and experience
- I expected some information about education and social problems of young migrants from other countries in Europe and suggestion for better integration in European community
- Commitment to asylum
- Learn about the situation of young migrants in other European countries; learn different methods of working with these issues; learn about the Council of Europe's contribution to bring these issues up to debate; find opportunities to cooperate; contribute with information about the work on these issues in my home country; have fun in Budapest
- To share experience
- I think this nice meeting is a good intercultural experience. It should give an opportunity to use the experience of other people for solving our problems related to migration
- To find out if there is a way that migrants will be accepted to the different countries; may be – may be not?
- Understanding of how immigrants may be helped to integrate into the different countries of Europe; to understand how situations of young migrants differ in each country
- I hope that the MP's will recognise that negative rhetoric against minorities to gain popularity or elections is wrong and see that mutual respect and help is more fruitful to society
- To meet youth actors in the field of migration and know their work; to pass on experience and gain knowledge regarding the official work done in the field; to see concrete proposals developed by both parliamentarians and youth representatives
- To establish new relationships
- To cooperate with the Parliamentarians to improve the migration and youth policies; to focus on the situation of young migrants and minority women; concrete activities/programmes

- To be part of the joint effort in improving the situation of young migrants in an ever-closer Europe
- Government, national governmental institutions. Non-governmental organisations and civil society; commitment to responsibility sharing as to separated seeking asylum children in Europe
- Establish contact with youth NGO representatives; get some experience in fighting racism and discrimination among youth; learn more about the specific situation of young migrants
- I expect more information on youth immigration situation in Balkan and Europe
- To identify mechanisms for improving the situation
- To gain experience on this issue, to get to know different people
- Good ideas about how to integrate the migrants in the host society. On the other hand I hope to find some answers on educational questions as well
- Broaden the field of activities of my organisation
- To set up contacts with Parliamentarians
- As I am one of the young migrants who left his homeland for good education and job opportunity, I expect from this hearing a better future for youth facing racism, violence and intolerance in the society which they do consider helpful for their future. It is very important to hold such conferences which support cultural exchange, life experience and a most appropriate way to find common solutions. I am personally impressed by this seminar and consider it could be useful for valuable suggestions, to better the situation of migrants in my homeland
- I hope the results of the hearing will be: 1. Adopting the PACE resolution on migration and refugees; 2. Exchange of experience on issues of integration of refugees into the local community; 3. To set up networks
- I am not representing neither a Parliament nor a youth organisation, however I would like to write a few words. The problem of migration is very important for Ukraine: many talented people are leaving the country in search for a better motherland. I would like to hear how it is possible to prevent this process and solve these problems in the countries of the former socialistic commonwealth. Thanks to the organisers for the brilliant idea of such a hearing.
- I expect the creation of a network of youth and parliamentarians
- Get some workable ideas by exchanging experience
- I am afraid of short-term pre-election commitment of parliamentarians.
- I would like to see the level of commitment of parliamentarians on migration issues
- I hope that we can make the situation of us young migrants visible and get important advise from parliamentarians on how to improve our situation
- I hope that the conclusions of this meeting and the parliamentarians who are present here and want to listen to the voice of young people, will include that we are an important group for the future of Europe.

#### IV. PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION OF YOUNG MIGRANTS

*(Rapporteurs: Mr. Doros CHRISTODOULIDES, Cyprus,  
and Ms. Maria SEREDA, Ryazan School of Human Rights, Russia)*

*Co-Chairs: Mrs Terezija STOISITS, Austria,  
Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migration  
and Ms. Elvira KALMÁR, Association for Migrants, Hungary*

*Introduction: Mr. Hasan HABIB, The Finnish Youth Cooperation Alliansi*

##### **Co-Chair Ms. STOISITS**

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning again. This is the first working session of our hearing, and it is a great honour for me to be Chair this morning together with Mrs Kalmár from Hungary.

##### **Co-Chair Ms. KALMÁR**

In our topic, "Participation and integration of young migrants," Mr Hassan Habib from Finland, from the Finnish Youth Co-operation, is going to give us a short ten minute presentation about the situation in Finland and raise for us some issues arising from his own experience.

##### **Mr. HASSAN**

I would like to start with one short story of a young migrant who has lived in Finland for more than eight years. He moved to Finland when he was a minor. A month ago I was in the street, doing street work, it was a Friday evening, and I happened to meet him around twelve o'clock at night. We were talking about different things, how he was doing in Finland, but after a while I realised that he was very depressed. To try to put him in a more positive mood I just told him, "Come on. Just think about Somalia: you have war there; you don't have all the security you might get in Finland, Finland is a social welfare country." In reaction to that, he told me, "Hassan, Finland is a social welfare country for the dogs, not for the human beings." Not understanding what he was trying to say, I had to ask him, "What do you mean?" His answer was, "Hassan, if you go out for a walk with your dog, you will notice that most people pay attention to the dog, they might even pet it. But if you walk alone, people don't notice your existence, nobody would even look at you. That is the reason I am telling you this is a social welfare country for the dogs, not for the human beings: and especially if you are a foreigner." I could not say anything.

*Has anyone ever  
calculated the cost  
of not integrating  
migrants into  
society?*

*A young participant*

Sometimes participation can be a matter of a feeling of belonging. If the migrant does not feel that he belongs to society, it can be very difficult for him to participate. It also can be an obstacle for him. Participation and integration are, in my opinion, very much interlinked. If participation means being active, taking an active role in the society, then if someone is participating we can say the person is integrated. Integration does not mean only the adoption of the new country's customs and culture. One's language and culture, previous working experience, studies and so on are remarkable assets that should continue to be put to use even after moving to a new country. If there is no one way to integrate in the society, the integration process only defines the framework against which one can plan their future in the new country. What can be demanded from the immigrant is above all an active, responsible role concerning his situation and full respect to the new country and to its culture. A good integration process

should support the immigrants in integrating into the new society, and so must encourage them to participate politically, socially, economically and culturally, as well as complementing their previous working experience, and enabling them to develop the new forms of knowledge needed in their new country. The purpose of integration should be to promote equal opportunities for the immigrants, to help them develop a feeling of belonging to the new society. One might say that integration is both a process and an intention, but either way, it has to come from both sides. Yet in some countries around western Europe, when we talk about integration, we talk about assimilation. Integration may mean different things to different people. How do you measure full participation? A scientific definition says that 'the measure of participation can be assessed against whether people may gain collective control over their lives so as to achieve their interests as a group, and should indicate a method by which to enhance the power of those people who lack it'. I put it to the participants – if we consider today's reality for a young migrant, what is happening around Europe?

##### **Mr. CILEVIČS**

I just wonder what you think about the theory, which draws a distinction between national minorities and migrant minorities. For national minorities it is traditionally very important to preserve their identities, and so usually they demand some special treatment. As to the migrant minorities, they usually strive to integrate and assimilate as soon as possible, so they try to achieve equal treatment and complete equality, not some form of discriminatory treatment. This approach implies that for migrant minorities, their separate identities and the respect given to these identities is not as important as it is for the national minorities. But I always have had serious doubts about the validity of this theory, in particular when applied to Europe.

So my first question is would you agree with this division, are migrant minorities indeed so different from traditional national minorities, and what is your view in the context of integration?

My second question is more directly related to the activities of the Council of Europe. As we know, just two weeks ago the Committee of Ministers approved the first conclusions on implementation of the framework convention for the protection of national minorities by Council of Europe member states – that is, state parties to this convention – and Finland was the very first country whose report was examined and conclusions were approved by the Committee of Ministers. From your experience, do you think that the mechanism of this framework convention might be relevant, not only for traditional national minorities but also to migrant minorities?

##### **Mr. HASSAN**

Yes, I think that national minorities and migrants have different identities. I try to deal with young people's realities and daily lives and I see that in Finland there is an equality approach. On paper, there is a system offering some control over society, and a welfare system. But human nature also requires friends; you need to feel respected in society. So it will be still be a matter of time.

##### **Mr. CONNOR**

Mr Habib made me think that integration does not mean that you have to assimilate completely, that you have to adopt the language, the customs, everything else about the country in which you find yourself living. Could he comment on the view that integration has to be a process of compromise in the sense that if I am the host and you are the guest, I compromise and you compromise? What is the difficulty in integration, as you see it: is it religious, is it adapting to the new economic practice of maybe working eight hours a day in the industrial society; is it education, is it about the way education is imparted in our culture?

You are a witness, as someone that has worked on this integration programme, you are now dealing with a Finnish culture which by western standards is considered to be very advanced, very enlightened: and yet you give the instance of the young man who felt a great sense of alienation. I understand that fully, but I would just like to get to the bottom, if at all possible, of the reasons for the not uncommon feeling of alienation experienced by that young man. So I am just wondering, what are the elements that cause the greatest difficulties, and what are the compromises which you think that need to be made by both sides in order that we can have much better understanding of this problem?

**Mr. HASSAN**

A week ago I was in a meeting of more than twenty-five NGO members, and most of them were representing minority organisations. One lady from Russia who had been living in Finland for more than twelve years told me that “OK, I am trying to integrate myself into Finnish society, I have learned the language, I am working as a volunteer, but where is the job that I am looking for? If we talk about Finnish integration, officially, the unemployment rate among foreigners is 47.7%; but in practice, if you take out people engaged in work practice, or language courses, or training courses, then for some migrant groups that percentage can be more than 80%. You have to be integrated into the society, learn the language, attend training courses; but after long periods of time, people become apathetic, they are not prepared to continue to give their volunteer services and to try to be integrated into the societies. Yes, it is a matter of compromise. Now I am a local government official in Finland, and I was the first immigrant who received a permanent job in the city of Turku: there are many Finnish young people or students who come to practice their work under my supervision. I often have to tell them that they make mistakes. It should be the same for immigrants: when they start their working life, they too will make mistakes, but we have to understand that there is a learning process for everyone; we cannot expect 100% service out of a foreigner within three months when we do not expect it from a Finnish worker.

**Mr. BRANGER**

A particular sentence caught my attention in Mr. Habib’s intervention: “Integration concerns us all”. And it is true. In more than twenty-five years of parliamentary life I have seen many agreements and conventions brought into existence, but they are not enough. And now we find out that in the next decades in Europe there will be approximately 30 million migrants. I think that if we are here today, it is to improve what we have done so far for those who have come to our countries. Integration concerns us all: what should we be doing – and in particular, what should politicians be doing? I think, first of all that we have to make a greater effort to communicate within our own countries. We have to say clearly and openly that it is not possible to stem the phenomenon of migration. We have to educate people, starting with the experiences of people like yourself. It is from these experiences that we have to readapt our actions to respect the differences between people, and to turn these differences into complementarity. It is absolutely necessary to have a job: migrants should work, they should be able to support their families and themselves, to have the means to live a decent life. I am here because I am convinced that we must make this an effort to communicate with and educate young people.

**Mr. MUTMAN**

As a migration committee we considered a lot of information regarding what is going on in this area, particularly with respect to the integration and participation of the immigrants. As we all know, for political and economic reasons, it is a fact that many people continue to be driven from their homes and from their cultures, and try to take refuge elsewhere. So Europe has become a refuge for many immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees. The number of immigrants continues to rise every year. Young people now constitute the majority of this

group. It is a fact that Europe has an ageing population; the problem is, as Hassan said, that the continent needs young labour and perhaps in fifteen or twenty years Europe will depend on young immigrants’ labour. This is why a great deal of work should be done for the integration of immigrants. I think that the quickest way of integrating young immigrants is first to teach them the language, and then, to help them familiarise themselves with the cultures and the values of the societies in which they now live. And secondly, to help them find work or to engage in education. If they manage to participate in their new society they will begin to feel at home.

I also want to mention some problems encountered by Turkish citizens living in other European countries. Today, over four million Turkish citizens are living in various countries of Europe. 3.5 million of them are settled in European Union countries. The majority of those people have been living in these countries for more than 20 years. More than half of them constitute the ‘third generation’ of young immigrants. Polls show that 80% of young immigrants opt to stay in the host countries and to become an integral part of their societies. In recent years, the International Labour Organisation produced a study which provides evidence of direct and indirect discrimination against immigrants: the resulting marginalisation and exclusion of immigrants reinforces xenophobic tendencies in their countries of residence. As immigrants are excluded from the mainstream of societies, they increasingly become targets of this evil phenomenon. For example, in the past numerous Turkish citizens living in western societies have been harassed, attacked and some even killed in racist attacks. This is the problem of all immigrants: I only mention Turkish citizens as an example of their reality. In these situations the victims were mostly young immigrants. As Mr Habib said, integration is a reciprocal process. There must be absolute tolerance on the part of nationals as well as absolute docility on the part of immigrants.

**Rapporteur Mr. CHRISTODOULIDES**

I asked myself “How do we satisfy the young people, the migrants, who are expecting from us, the politicians, the governmental representatives, solutions to the whole problem? And what is the whole problem?” And my answer is nobody can promise that this problem will be solved, at least not within the next few decades. Why not? Because it would involve a great economic and financial cost. The so-called civilised societies need to spend more than 20 trillion dollars just to create better conditions for migrants. To solve this problem has too high a cost. But what is the meaning of integration? In my personal opinion it is not only to give migrants a roof, or even a job, or even the opportunity to study together with our children. No, it is too easy to do that, although at the same time it is very difficult. To solve the integration problem we have to try to give equal opportunities to all the migrants living in our countries. And what is the meaning of the equal opportunities? Civil rights? Habib is a member of the National Youth Council in Finland: he belongs to the elite of the migrants living in Europe. You can find only a few such members in local parliaments, and in the Parliamentary Assembly we have very few people both representing their migrant communities and the countries where they live. We need to create conditions for equal opportunities in the social sphere: but does that mean that the Cypriot worker must have the same salary and wages as the Philippine one? One fifth of the population of Cyprus now are migrants. The Cypriot worker receives about one thousand pounds for his work; and for the same work the immigrant receives one fifth. Can we create, are we as a state to create the equal opportunities for migrants? My answer is no, because we have to change the social system. And I am concluding: will anyone give the same opportunities to our people all over Europe? The answer is no. So how can we create equal opportunities for the millions of migrants living now in Europe at the same time that as not wishing to create equal opportunities for the majority of our own people?

**Mr. AHMAD**

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have put in light the issue of what we perceive as ‘alien’.

**Mrs BASARAB**

We should not look at the problem of migration only from the point of view of the host country. My teachers often look at people from particular countries when talking about those countries, perhaps subconsciously, but everyone is human and we should aim to improve ourselves. Most European countries have a very anti-immigrant policy; for instance, I have lived abroad for four months and I still do not have my resident’s permit because of a backlash against immigrants and because of procedural problems.

**Ms. YASSIN**

I have had practical difficulties with my residence permit too: every year I have to go to a police station to apply, and then must wait two months to learn whether the application is granted. I would also agree with Hassan that integration is a two-sided process, which is complicated by cultural issues and contrasting expectations and made more difficult by the lack of a migrant perspective: for instance, the commission for the integration of north Africans contains no migrants. Furthermore it is difficult to ‘measure’ integration: it is not just a matter of language, or ability to travel; it is also work, practical and institutional matters, but especially work as migrants often feel excluded from certain jobs. Integration is a feeling of belonging to the community; and this requires, as was said, a change in attitudes and opinions

*After the collapse of Soviet Union, in the new political situation, it turned out that I also became a migrant, a second generation one.*

*A parliamentarian*

which starts with education in schools. Perhaps in Scandinavian countries this process is undertaken, but it is not in Italy; for instance, teaching of colonial history is poorly done. It is important that young people feel comfortable with migrants from a very early age, but this is not easy to achieve and will take time and money. To succeed, the process must incorporate the needs, perspectives and experiences of migrants. Migrants should be involved in everything that concerns them.

**Mr. ZVIAGUINE**

There are two sides of the process: one is the preservation of social structures, the other the fulfilment of integration rights, and both depend on the society itself. In my opinion resolving the problem of integration of the migrants with political decisions that are not shared by society at large can provoke the negative reaction of the youth

**Mr. MOENS**

I would like to address myself to the government officials, in particular those from western Europe. What reasons actually refrain them from opening up to migrants? Part of the answer is already given by the speaker who mentioned that there was a big cost involved; but what I wonder is whether anyone has ever calculated the cost of not integrating migrants into society.

**Mrs ALARCON**

I am from a migrant family and so can see both sides. European migrants are treated differently from non-European migrants. In my personal experience I had an opportunity to be totally integrated. I share the opinion that having a feeling of belonging to a community and seeing a future for oneself in it amount to integration. When you see a future ahead of you, you feel integrated as a part of the community. Now that I am living in Spain again, and I see people who come from other countries to live there, I can see that participation is not made easy, especially for young people. In fact I see very little participation amongst the young

migrants in the NGO where I work. It is necessary to educate the young people who work with young migrants, but to educate not only them. We witness constant stigmatisation of the migrant community by the media, so it is very important to educate the media because the image they give of migrants is passed on throughout society.

**Mr. AHMED**

I wanted to mention participation of the children of migrants. During a debate once a young person said “you don’t learn to be a citizen, you live as a citizen”. From this we can understand the reason why many young people – who sometimes live in very difficult conditions- do not participate. I wanted to pose a question to the participants: do you think that time is an element of integration? In France there are second-generation migrants who are not integrated, or who do not feel integrated. In France there was a logic of assimilation, but it failed. There is a logic of integration, but it has yet to produce results

**Mrs SEREDA**

There is another very serious problem found particularly in the countries of the former Soviet Union. We speak of the problem of integration as if it was a serious problem only for immigrants. But it is also a serious problem for the host country. In Russia there are many immigrants from the south who do not want to integrate. This is a great problem because they are very widely accepted in the country but they strive to retain their own identity, they retain their national communities and refuse to co-operate with Russians. And this is why, I think, the problem can hardly be solved as long as young migrants themselves try to introduce their culture in the host country.

**Mr. DÍAZ DE MERA**

Do you think that religion can be an obstacle to integration?

**Mr. GABER**

I would like to share with you the situation of Ukraine, which hosts two million migrants and one million more who have come recently from Pakistan, China and other countries. Integration is a hard and painful process for both sides – the host society and migrants themselves –: on both sides there are people with rights. I can understand that young people are in favour of a fast integration process, but it is hard to imagine that it could take place in a few months. Migrants should show readiness to compromise, even more than the society they arrive to. The process of integration cannot be shortened, we can support it but we cannot make it faster.

**Mr. HORDIES**

In reaction to what Mr. Habib said about dogs and communication, it should be said that this is not necessarily valid only for migrants. Nowadays, human relationships in our societies are often very individualistic. I notice that there are groups of teenagers, which are very closed even to non-migrants. Sometimes we ask migrants to display more civic responsibility than we do. There is a risk of creating migrants’ ghettos. When people settle in small-size communities – and we see this also in rural areas – a sense of solidarity develops, which indicates that there is good communication.

As a politician, I would like to inform you about the measures that are being taken in my country, Belgium. There is a committee on equal opportunities where everybody has the right to lodge a complaint on the basis of discrimination, including racial discrimination, for instance in having access to employment; and there is a regularisation programme for 30 000 undocumented people which is about to be concluded. Integration at the political level and at the level of trade unions was mentioned during the debate. For a number of years the right to

belong to and vote in trade unions has been granted to migrant workers, a high number of trade unions leaders in Belgium are of migrant origin and a growing number of parliamentarians share this background. In addition, the parliament is discussing the right to vote in local elections for all foreign citizens who have been living for 3 or 5 years in Belgium.

These are indications that the problem of integration is being actively considered. I would like to mention economic migration, which is a legitimate form of migration. Some say that it implies a risk of weakening the social security system; but on the other hand we are all aware that migrants are often employed in the black market, sometimes in very worrying conditions, as we shall see tomorrow when we discuss trafficking in human beings and prostitution. The question I would like to ask is whether it is possible to imagine a system by which economic migrants can go back to their country of origin after having worked abroad. We could envisage 'repetitive contracts' serving this purpose.

#### **Mrs BUŠIĆ**

I have written down a question from Mr Moens to the politicians: 'what refrains you from integrating migrants into our society?' But on the other hand Ms Sereda says that in some cases migrants do not want to integrate. I think we have heard so many different points of view, opinions and approaches, but I sense a feeling of bitterness in what we hear from young people.

I would like share with you my experience, since in my youth I emigrated to the Unites States where I felt fully integrated. Perception really counts. A friend who was in the same situation as me felt that she did not belong to there whereas I had a different approach. I said "Well, I will go to school, I will learn the language, I will work, I will find a job". And I did. I integrated into the society, and frankly speaking I never asked anything from society. I just wanted to be part of it, I didn't want them to perceive me as a Croat, I just wanted to become like the society that I saw around me. Now maybe that is not the right approach, maybe you want to preserve your identity in the different societies and the different cultures of Europe, I am just giving you my own point of view.

#### **Mr. HABIB**

I think that so many ideas and questions have been raised within this hour. I probably tried to provoke people through that story, and I suppose that was intentional, but I would like to say one more thing, because one colleague mentioned about a lack of intention to participate. I would like to give one quotation, from Mahatma Ghandi addressing a United Nations meeting: "you can meet everyone's need, but not everyone's greed".

#### **Co-Chair Ms. STOISITS**

There were three questions which were from my point of view especially interesting and which should be kept in mind during our hearing. The first question was, "What are the costs of not integrating, and of not being integrated?" And the second question was, to us politicians, "Do you think that integration is just a question of time?" And the third question was, "Are there some groups who do not want to be integrated?"

## **V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

*(Rapporteurs: Mr. Jean-Guy BRANGER, France  
and Mr. Badri AHMED, Stop la Violence, France)*

*Co-chairs: Mr. Boris CILEVIČS, Latvia  
and Mr. Azer BAYRAMOV, Youth Development Organisation, Azerbaijan*

*Introduction: Ms. Adene Thuy DUONG VO, LNU, National Youth Council of  
Norway*

#### **Co-Chair Mr. CILEVIČS**

This session is devoted to the problem of education, which is very relevant when talking about young migrants. Access to high quality education is a crucial precondition for what we call effective social integration, for successful competition in the labour market and effective participation in society. Of course education is extremely important and is the main and probably the only tool to prevent marginalisation. As Mr Mutman mentioned today, very often immigrants form a kind of underclass in many respects, and I think that an appropriate system of education can be the key to coping with this problem.

On the other hand, education is also a tool for transferring cultural paradigms, values and traditions. It is a tool for preserving and developing cultural identity. So in a sense, with respect to young migrants, these two goals are in some sense conflicting. It is very important to hear your views and your opinions on such important issues as the extent to which cultural diversity should be taken into account in the education system, with respect to languages of education and the question of whether to establish partially separated educational institutions or have only those which are completely mixed. Or, in relation to teaching religious studies in the public education system, the importance of teaching history, the content of curricula, such things as were mentioned already today.

In my view all these issues relate to what we mean when we are speaking about integration: how to reconcile these conflicting approaches; how to avoid conflicts in families. I am looking forward to a very interesting and constructive discussion.

#### **Ms. DUONG VO**

My name is Adene Thuy Duong Vo, and I represent the Minorities Political Work Group in the Norwegian Youth Council. I am originally Vietnamese. I immigrated to Norway when I was one year old, and because of my background I have had a lot of contacts with immigrants. I want to make my presentation in a way that an immigrant could understand, because I feel that they will not participate until they know that they can understand what is being said. I feel that minority organisations, and non-governmental organisations in general, have an important contribution to make in addressing these questions.

The politicians, of course, also have a very important public role, because the people who come to a new country will look first at the newspapers and what is said about them there. I think that the education system is very important because it reaches everybody of school age. And, if you can choose whether or not to be involved in a non-governmental organisation you cannot choose whether to go to school or not.

It is important that immigrants can express their opinion at all the stage of the education system: teachers in schools, kindergartens, and higher education. On the other hand, at every stage of the education system it is important to have staff that are competent at dealing with immigration questions. When you go to a class and you feel that you are not part of it, then you feel that you have a problem. It is very important that when this happens you can find somebody you can talk to.

It was interesting to hear the question what is the cost of “no integration”. I hope that during the discussion there will be a lot of solutions or suggestions on what we can do to include the immigrants in making decisions and policies. It is easy to say that we have achieved something, that we have discussed an issue, but often this does not resolve anything.

I invite participants to inform us about the situation in their countries. From my part, I can share with you what happens in Norway. Throughout the education system there are separate classes for immigrants. When I was I child I was attending school like everybody else, and in addition I was followed by a special teacher two hours a week. This teacher would speak about everything with me, from social things to school things, because something which is obvious and natural for the native population of a country is not so for a foreigner and sometimes they need guidance to understand the society they are in. I understand that this costs money, but having a special teacher for immigrant children in addition to normal school lessons would help their integration and understanding of society. Immigrants, whatever their background or nationality, face similar problems and should get together to give voice to their difficulties. Therefore I think that it is very important that the non-governmental organisations work together. Also, it happens very often that immigrants NGOs are actually managed by people who are not immigrants. Also in that context it is necessary to enhance immigrants’ participation, including at high level of management.

#### **Ms. PISCOPO**

I do agree that education and training are the most important element, because they can affect people’s way of thinking from an early stage. Tolerance is also important, and school is the ideal place to learn it. Also, I think that religious education should not be compulsory in schools, because it is unfair, for instance, that Muslim children have to sit through Roman Catholic religion classes.

#### **Mr. HABIB**

The education and training provided to foreigners and immigrants, whether temporary or permanent, should have a goal and should take into account their previous educational and working experiences. In Finland, for example, foreign education or work is worthless, as only European certificates are valued, and this is discriminatory against immigrants. There are training courses provided to immigrants, but most of them do not really help, they make immigrants apathetic in their efforts to find work; people spend their time going from one course to another without ever achieving the result of finding work. If you want to integrate immigrants and make them useful members of society, you need a plan: and the politicians’ failure to produce one is itself a kind of discrimination or even racism; policies are being produced only for the sake of winning votes, not for results.

#### **Mr. HAFSTEINSSON**

I am going to be bold: I think I have the formula to solve the problem of integration of immigrants. I was a project manager for receiving Kosovar refugees, in 1998. We received them in Iceland, to a small town called Dalvik, which has a population of 2000. We received 24 people all of whom had been through difficulties, but we managed to integrate them very

well. We offered them houses, we bought everything for the houses that they needed. If they wanted something, we gave it to them, and I was always available. There were two supporting families for every family that we received.

The project was very successful: I have never heard a complaint about it. So what we need to do is to do everything for the people that we are going to receive. We have both to ask them questions about what they need when they come to this country, and to have ideas about what they need. And we have to be able to fulfil those needs; at the very least, the basic needs. If we are not able to do that, then we may as well forget the whole thing, because the problem will develop until it seems insurmountable. And that is the problem today. If I am having financial problems, I stop buying things: at least that is what I usually do. Similarly, if we are having immigration problems, we have to ask ourselves, “Can we receive more immigrants? Is it possible?”

Furthermore, the people themselves must genuinely want to go to the country. So we have to ask them the question, “Do you really want to come to Iceland? Do you know the difficulties you will be up against?”

#### **Mr. MOENS**

One of the elements we have been talking about is mutual respect. Now I believe that mutual respect also means mutual responsibility. We are all the time talking about education for migrants, but we should also look at ourselves; maybe it would be good to introduce into the education systems of our own nationals something about foreign cultural backgrounds. Because I believe that this would only improve our mutual respect, it would also enrich our own personalities; I think that it would improve our understanding of foreign cultures; and it would also tackle one of the elements that refrain us from opening society to migrants, namely fear of the unknown. The more we know about the cultures of migrants, the better we will understand them and the more we will respect them.

#### **Mr. RAFIQUE**

Mr Moens has already mentioned what I wanted to say, but let me emphasise it once again. I think that most of the debate on integration is unilateral, what immigrants should do to integrate. But what about the other side? In my view, you cannot fully achieve integration without knowing the immigrant. This is because immigrants are considered strangers, and the reason why they are seen as strange by the host citizens is that there is a vacuum of understanding of their culture and particularly their religion. I think the basic and most important source of knowledge of people is education, and I would say that in the western countries, the decision-makers have been very reluctant to introduce education of the cultures and the religions of others. And that contributes to confrontation and the cycle of violence. For example, and without going into detail, the religion of Islam is now in focus everywhere because of terrorism.

As a matter of fact, as the name implies, Islam is about peace. It has the same origin as Christianity and Judaism. And the prophet Jesus is one of the most respected in Islam. Despite this there are so many misconceptions, Muslims are labelled as terrorists and violent extremists, and the people accept these views. Why? Because they are not provided with the knowledge which is needed for a proper understanding.



**Mr. YAÑEZ-BARNUEVO**

I'll speak in my capacity as a parliamentarian and not as rapporteur. I believe that the issues of difference, respect for minorities, nationalism, countries of origin are perhaps the most provocative. But there are values, which are superior to these aspects of migration, which guide the relations between peoples of different religions, race or nationality. These are the universal values of human rights. I believe that in discussing education and training, not only the immigrants but also the entire population must be educated on the general principles of the superior values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The very concept of minority is misleading. For example, are women a minority? No, they are the majority. But it is a majority, which often suffers discrimination, even today in European societies.

**Ms. MAISURADZE**

Adene mentioned the education structure of her country, which has separate classes for immigrants. From your experience, do you think this is better or not?

**Ms. DUONG VO**

I have been in contact with immigrant-only classes even if I did not attend them myself. Many black people react to the way they are spoken about in school books, and also to their portrayal in the media and to current policies. It is also impossible to distinguish first from second-generation immigrants. Sometimes they have different attitudes to their original cultures: some want to be a part of the culture of the host country.

**Ms. YASSIN**

We talked about knowing the migrants, and I think that a way that we can do this is to include them in the educational programme so that they can bring their experience and their culture

*Immigrants are seen as a source of danger to society, a view promoted by the media which never reports on the positive aspects of immigration.*

*Discrimination is perpetuated by the media.*

*A young participant*

and their own perspective on their history. Education is important, and it is important that all young people, migrants included, can identify with what they are studying. One way could be to let migrants run projects or programmes in the schools, and then widen these programmes. It is also important in the schools to have cultural mediators or educators with a migrant background, or people from the majority who know very well the situation of the migrants and their cultures, so that they can be a bridge, and can assist the families in communicating with the school, because sometimes there is a gap there because some members of the migrant community need help with the language. And the last thing, to the parliamentarians, is to bring European institutions into the

programmes, and also to broaden our vision of Europe to include the minorities. If we think about London, who is European there? In London there are people from different cultures with the same passport. My last comment is that I am facing a particular problem at the university, since some courses require Italian nationality, to the exclusion of students from foreign countries.

**Ms. SEREDA**

We should place emphasis not only on national or basic education but also on teaching immigrants human rights and tolerance. They should learn not only the culture of the host country, but also to co-operate with strangers and persons of different cultures. Additional education should also be mentioned, by which I mean seminars and training and courses and so on. I feel sometimes that the example of the USA should be made the rule: if you want to go and live there, you must have passed an exam in American culture and American language.

**Mr. ZVIAGUINE**

I would like to mention what happens in the Russian Federation. In the Republics which compose the federation people have the right to speak their national language. At the same time, there exists a tradition that after finishing secondary school, young people set out to large Russian cities to start studying there. These people start to call themselves migrants, due to the 5–10 000 kilometres distance from their families, and due to the fact of living in a different culture. The main element that facilitates their integration is the use and knowledge of the Russian language. Therefore, for me the idea of separate classes for migrants and non-migrants goes against integration. Besides, I think that it is good for migrants and non-migrants to share rooms in halls of residence because this facilitates mutual knowledge and equality.

**Co-chair Mr. BAYRAMOV**

In Azerbaijan we have internally displaced persons, who came to Baku because of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabach. Before coming to Baku they lived in a village in the country with wide-open spaces, and if one wanted to call the other, he could just shout. But now they live in block of flats where lots of people live, and still to call each other shouting from one floor to the other. This is not a problem between nationalities; but we see that even within a country, with people who share the same cultures, the same traditions, there are differences. So we have educational and training projects for internally displaced.

**Mr. AHMAD**

I would like quickly to say that in effect participation is necessary, and that participation must be organised. In fact training is indispensable; it permits migrants to acquire the tools that permit them to participate as social, political and economic actors.

**Mr. KASO**

We are now talking about education, but we have not specified what kind of education and training. There are several instruments of the Council of Europe, and almost all the constitutions of European countries establish the principles of and the possibilities for people to receive education. And national legislation also provides for national minorities to establish their own educational institutions, whether kindergartens or universities; sometimes funded privately or, in some countries, with the government also providing money. It is the individual's choice which school to attend: a minority or some specialised school, or the state-run national school. It is to the individual to do everything to ensure that he is tolerated by society, rather than the other way round.

**Co-Chair Mr. CILEVIČS**

Many of the proposals made by the participants fit into the framework of the modern concept of multicultural education; proposals like teaching tolerance, education founded on basic common universal values, and the need to teach the background of migrants and ethnic minorities. This is indeed a very new and fast developing concept, and it is extremely important to be aware of it and to make governments pay sufficient attention to the needs of special groups. I believe that Mr Zviaguine spoke about a very important thing, that is, the call for unification: the same rules and the same language, because otherwise young people will look different which will prevent their acceptance by the majority. For in my view this is at the heart of the problem: the majority should accept minorities, without making them drop their identity, without forcing them to become similar to the majority. This is the core of the problem, which is why I can hardly agree with your recommendation. It is in fact a kind of accommodation of diversity through elimination of diversity, but in reality it is forced assimilation, which is explicitly prohibited by the framework convention for the protection of national minorities.



**Mr. HORDIES**

I would like to go back to the intervention concerning the reception of 20 Kosovan families in Iceland, in a village which counted 2,000 inhabitants. This reminds me of the problem of concentration, which sometimes makes integration more difficult. Schools would be the ideal place for immigrant children and their families to make contacts with other communities, and namely the community of the host country. And yet in large urban areas it is a common phenomenon to have entire classes, and sometimes even schools, which are completely formed by immigrant children. Another aspect I would like to mention is multicultural education. In Belgium there has been a lively debate about the introduction of philosophy and morals classes in schools instead or aside religion. Television would be an extremely useful tool to present a range of models, consistently with a multicultural society. Instead television proposes one single model. Finally, a survey carried out in Belgium shows that young migrants having accomplished university studies find it more difficult than non-migrant young people with the same level of education to have access to the labour market. This is very discouraging, and leads many young people to wonder about the benefits of studying if discrimination prevents them from having a job.

**Ms. AIMIUMI**

I agree that education and training are important, but I would also add information. Children must be educated, but also their parents must be provided with information. We must provide information on diversity and encourage multi-culturalism. Where there are many immigrant children, even if the teachers are working well, inter-cultural activities are needed, such as could be provided by other organisations such as my own in Torino. An understanding starts from this, but there is also the problem of discrimination, racism and intolerance in secondary schools. Failure to inform people of the richness of diversity can thus be a dangerous thing. In Italy immigrants are seen as a source of danger to society, a view promoted by the media which never reports on the positive aspects of immigration. Discrimination is perpetuated by the media, but this can be confronted by government legislation and educational programmes, for teachers, for students and for their parents.

**Mr. AHMAD**

We have talked of many peoples as subjects of integration: Russians of Central Asias and Tatars, French of black or north African origin, Germans of Turkish origin; each country has its own experience. But religion has been mentioned, and I wish to give my opinion on it and particularly on Islam. Perhaps it would be interesting to organise an event specifically on religion, as it is too big a subject to consider properly on this occasion. What makes integration difficult is often a lack of knowledge of the person's background, especially that of Muslims, and a perception that Muslims are inherently hostile towards western civilisation. If this view is repeated regularly in the media, people will believe it. To change the situation you must change public opinion, which takes a long time, but could be helped by the contribution of high profile individuals making symbolic gestures on certain dates. But politicians do not approach Muslim organisations to engage in dialogue.

**Ms. ALARCON**

I would like to raise an issue that I have witnessed by close. The education of young migrants who arrive in the host country at the age which corresponds to the end of compulsory education. In Spain compulsory education is until you are 16. I met young immigrants who were 16 and were not admitted to compulsory education, even if they had not received it or finished in their country.

**Co-Chair Mr. CILEVIČS**

I believe we have listened to a very good presentation, and that the discussion was really very interesting, and I would just single out some proposals made during the discussion today. Very briefly: the promotion of tolerance; education based on universal values; the teaching of human rights; consistent implementation of non-discrimination approaches in all policies; recognition of the distinct identity of migrant and non-migrant communities, including that religious education should not be imposed on migrants, and that courses relating to the culture of migrant groups should be included in the mandatory curricula and not only taught to migrants themselves but also to the majority population; that people of migrant origin should be recruited onto school staff; and of course there were others. I believe that these are some aspects of a general approach, which properly reflects the spirit of democracy and human rights.

As you know, the Council of Europe is all about democracy and human rights: this is why we are here, and this is why we are talking with you. I hope very much, in concluding this session, that our dialogue, our discussion has not come to an end, but that our contacts can be maintained and that we shall keep in touch. Indeed, we need your ideas, we need permanent co-operation with you; and I believe that you are skilful enough to find out the addresses of the parliamentarians present here and that indeed we will be able to benefit from your advice and from your proposals also in future. And so, let me conclude this session exactly on time. Thank you.



## VI. RACISM, VIOLENCE, INTOLERANCE AND TERRORISM

*(Rapporteurs: Mr. Sergejus DMITRIJEVAS, Lithuania  
and Ms. Noemi ALARCON, University of Malaga, Spain)*

*Co-chairs: Mr. Agustín DÍAZ DE MERA, Spain  
and Ms. Xenia MARQUES,  
Portuguese Network of Young People for Equality*

*Introduction: Mr. Ronni ABERGEL, Danish Crime Prevention Council,  
Founding member of “Stop the violence”, Denmark*

### Co-chair Mr. DÍAZ DE MERA

Racism, intolerance and violence are the daily experience of young migrants living in European countries. Since the events of the 11th of September, the fight against international terrorism has become an important element of the debate on migration. Straight away I give the floor to Mr. Ronni Abergel of the Danish Crime Prevention Council and a founder member of Stop the Violence, Denmark.

### Mr. ABERGEL

I would like to start out by saying that I am Ronni Abergel, I come from Copenhagen Denmark, I am about twenty eight years old now, and for the past eight years I have worked for violence prevention amongst youth, primarily with peer group education and on various violence prevention strategies as well as with ethnic minority groups. It is very dangerous to turn the events of September 11th into a religious conflict, and I hope that for this session we could agree, at least partially, that terrorism is not created by religion, but more by the lack of equal rights, and with my presentation I hope to show you what I mean. First of all, I would like to give a brief definition of some of the types of racism that we are experiencing in my

country, Denmark. Number one, racism of the native population against migrant minorities. Number two migrant groups that are racist towards other migrant groups. And then, I think one of the more serious problems is number three, and that is the migrant groups that are racist towards the Danish. What I would call reverse racism. Reverse racism is often created when groups are oppressed in society and they start building up anger and frustration towards the oppressors. We are experiencing quite a lot of problems within the third area of racism, and within the first area. We do not have a lot of conflicts within the second: we have them, but they are not as predominant as the two others. Along with these types of racism, we get different follow-up problems. We have to make a choice. Either we choose to go the way of integration, or slowly we will go into disintegration.

*As a parliamentarian, I think that the most important achievement of this hearing was the opportunity to discuss this issue with so many young people, young people with expertise, people who work with migration and who have a migrant background themselves.*

*A parliamentarian*

Right now there is an electoral campaign in Denmark: on Tuesday there is the election for the parliamentary assembly, and for the local municipal councils. The number one topic in the campaign for the politicians is integration and all the problems surrounding it, because integration did not really work in my country. We received a lot of migrant groups, especially in the early 60's from Turkey, and later on we have got a lot more from Pakistan, Yugoslavia, and a lot of refugees from war torn and conflict-ridden areas, so right now we have a very big,

mixed group; and one of the problems is that today, twenty and thirty years after the first wave, we know less about each other than we did when we began.

We are less tolerant today. The role of the media has already been discussed, but I think it is very relevant to raise this again: how do they portray the migrant groups? Many of these problems are connected; it is a chain reaction of problems that we are experiencing. I am not supposed to speak about education, but I have to make the connection between racism and intolerance and education. The problem is, we now have the children of those who arrived in the 60s. They themselves are having children, so we are having what we could call the third generation: second generation born in the country, but third generation migrant.

These children are very much disheartened, and I would like to give just a brief example from real life. I have been visiting a lot of schools these past years, doing a lot of lectures and having a lot of educational talks with the youth about attitudes towards violence and racism and drugs, and I meet these two boys in the train on the way back from a lecture. One guy is Arabic, the other guy is from Africa. And I am sitting in a compartment of the train and I overhear their conversation. The African boy told me his name was Danny, and when I heard him speak he was talking about going into drugs, becoming a drug dealer. And when I hear something like that, I cannot sit still. He told me that he feels that his future in this country, in my country, is so bleak, his chance of reaching success within the area that he would like is so small, that his only solution now is to turn to crime. And I asked him why does he feel this way, and he said because my brother went to school, he went to college, he went on to the university and became a doctor, but nobody would hire him. Because his last name was not Hansen or Jensen or Petersen, as everybody else is called in my country. He had written over fifty applications, and often he would not even get a reply. And when he would call the hospitals or the clinics they would pretend they never received the application. These two boys were very frustrated, and they had been in contact with a group that had offered them the position of being in charge of distributing drugs to the young people in their neighbourhood. And they were seriously considering taking that offer.

Like Hassan Habib told us, people do not believe, and if you do not believe you have a chance, you will not fight. And if you will not fight, it is because you do not believe that you have anything to fight for. And if you don't have anything to fight for, in my way of reasoning, it is the same as having nothing to lose. How will you successfully integrate a group that feels it has nothing to lose? This is one of the most dangerous problems threatening my society, at least right now: we have quite a large group of young children of migrants, second and third generation, who are lost from society; it is not all of them, but it is quite a large group. They do not believe that they have a future. The main problem is discrimination on the job market. We need to have some sort of legislation that secures equal rights in the job market. If we get these young people working, they will not be out in the streets committing crimes. If these young people have a job, I very much doubt that they would join extremist groups, and later on become part of something much worse. And I also believe that religious fanatics would not be influential. But when you feel that you have no future, it is easy to turn to something else to believe in. And in that sense, many people will turn to anything that gives them comfort. While I am down here today, all the politicians at home are campaigning. I want to just present you with some of suggestions that are being raised in this campaign right now, to give you a feeling of which way the wind is blowing. These are examples of legislation that the what we could call the right wing or the conservatives is threatening to pass if it becomes the next Danish government on Tuesday; these are some of the suggestions that they have been promoting for the past week. One of them: migrant children born in Denmark who want to marry a partner from their original country, let's say Turkey, shall no longer have the right to

stay to Denmark. Which means, instead, the Danish born son of a migrant, or daughter of a migrant, must move to the country of the partner and reside there. Because, in their logic, if it is a Turkish girl, and a boy born from Turkish parents in Denmark, the connection with Turkey is stronger than the connection with Denmark. So they should go there and live there.

The other suggestion, which is even more scary, is that children of migrants who are born in my country but who later in their life are convicted of a felony, such as drug dealing, robbery, rape or repeated violent crimes, shall have their citizenship revoked and ultimately be deported from the country. This is a serious suggestion: for those who do not believe me, I have brought newspapers in Danish, and I am quite sure my friend over here will translate them if people want proof. This is not the right way to go, in my opinion, to solve these problems. I have a few open questions to round it off for this group. We have already mentioned it quickly. If we leave a group out of society, what does that group have to lose? These are the children who are committing violence in the streets, these are the children who are doing much damage and creating insecurity and not building bridges but the opposite, creating barriers. How do we win over an opponent that has nothing to lose? How will you beat someone who does not feel like he has anything else to lose? And if we do not act now, there is a serious risk that all of us in society will lose out.

Anyway, looking ahead at what could be done, and you Boris, you were talking a lot about concrete proposals, and I have four pages for you aside from these. To secure equal rights and opportunities for all in Europe is number one. Because if you have equal rights, then you will try to make the most of your life, and I believe that will bring a many people together in the process, it will make us a lot closer to each other.

Two: investing in creating better living standards and opportunities for the citizens of troubled and war-torn countries. That means, if they have it good in Somalia, if they feel nice in Pakistan, if they have a decent living standard, they will not come rushing to Europe. And the Danish strategy for years has been, instead of investing in Denmark, in building refugee camps, supporting immigrants coming here by doing that, instead we are investing almost 1.25% of our gross national product, we are the country in the world that is giving away the most money every year to poverty struck countries. We are doing that from the philosophy that if they are doing better at home, people will stay at home, and our population will be maintained because right now we have areas in my country where the Danish people are the minority.

Just before I left yesterday there was a big story in the news about a gymnasium where 88% of the pupils were not of Danish ethnic background. What happens when you move into a residential area and 88% are different nationalities? I mean, as soon as they start coming, the Danish move out, and then there becomes more room, and then new migrants move in; and then you have a ghetto.

In the 1980s, when I used to be very violent and I was running around the streets being very frustrated and stupid, there was no black-on-black crime in my country, which meant that if an African came walking on the street, an Arab boy would never hurt him. Today, when we put them all in the ghetto, they fight each other, instead of fighting the white people. It is quite strange. My father left Denmark because he said he couldn't live there any more, it was psychological apartheid. He was away for fifteen years, he left in 1979, he came back in 1994, and in 1994 he only stayed for two and a half years because psychologically he was being broken down. He is dark, he speaks with an accent; but he is an educated reporter, he is a journalist. He used to have a good job at one of the biggest papers in my country; but when he came back all he could get was a job as a taxi driver. And he drove the taxi: one day one

guy assaulted him, he went to the police, the police told him “We know how people from your country drive, probably it was your own fault.” I am sure that you have heard many of these stories. And so my next proposal: only by making sure that we have security for all can we have security at home. And I think that by creating a more secure environment in the countries that are outside of western Europe, we will automatically reinforce our own security. So by helping them, we are helping ourselves. That is my appeal. Last but not least, I think that social exclusion is a very big problem: that the migrants are not welcome, and they do not feel welcome, and they have an inferiority complex. Finally, I just want to tell you that during the last seven years when I have been visiting a lot of schools, there is one question they always ask me. It is not, did you go to jail, did you ever shoot anybody, did you ever stab anybody with a knife; the first question is always, “Where do you come from?” Because I am not blond, I do not have blue eyes, and my last name is funny. And I tell them, listen, it is not important where I come from, it is not important where you come from, it is important where we are going. So let's go there together.

### **Mrs STOISITS**

500 years ago, my family was not originally from Austria: my name is not really German. And people used to ask this question, where do you come from, and I said from Burgenland, which is a province of Austria. Ronni, thank you very much for your presentation – I have just one question: what are other parties or civil society in Denmark doing against this ridiculous plans; ridiculous because they are against human rights, they are against the European Convention on Human Rights, against constitutional law, against the principles of the European Union. You said that the main topic in the campaign in Denmark at the moment is integration; but in fact it is the opposite of integration, it is racism, it's intolerance.

### **Mr. ABERGEL**

Thank you for the question. It is sometimes a difficult one for me, because I grew up Danish, and when people ask me where I come from or if I speak Danish, I sometimes wonder if I am alone in perceiving myself as being Danish. The topic of the election campaign is not ‘integration’, to translate more exactly it is ‘the problems with foreigners’. This is the way it is formulated, it is called ‘Ulinengproblemer’: problems with people from ‘Ausländer’ and it is not even a proper debate. Our minister of the interior suggested – and she was on CNN with this suggestion – only nine or twelve months ago, when they were down in the polls, that we take all the criminal refugees and all the criminal immigrants and we put them on an isolated island. She would never actually do this, like they would probably never pass this legislation, but they say it just to gain the support of the population, and what it shows is that when suggestions like this actually raise their standing in the polls, the population has had enough: the population has been watching this problem develop for twenty years now and nothing concrete has been done, nothing that really works, because we are still experiencing third generation migrant children that come to school in the first grade unable to speak a word of Danish because for the first six years of their lives they were staying at home with their parents who spoke only their native language.

In the last session, there was someone, I think Ahmad, who said “You do not need to learn the language:” you do need to learn the language, it is very necessary you learn the language, if you do not learn the language you don't have a chance. Right now, the reason why these children are on the street making so much trouble is because they do not respect their parents. How can you respect a father who does not understand the country he is living in, he does not



work, and if he has to go to see the doctor, a little boy of seven or eight years old has to go with him to the doctor? They lose respect, they lose authority, and the children are out on their own, out of control. And last but not least is the question of forced marriages. I did not get a chance to mention it because time was very short, but when we speak of equal rights and human rights, I believe it is a human right to have the opportunity to choose your own partner. We have a lot of women from a migrant background who are forced by their parents into arranged marriages. And they are typically married with somebody from the home country, who then needs to be brought over, and then his parents or his brothers and sisters can also come, and these numbers are rising and rising and the Danish population is getting scared.

**Mr. HABIB**

I had the same experience, I met some Danish youth workers representing the Danish National Youth Council and I was shocked talking with them. We have been talking about access to the system for immigrant young people: in the Danish youth council they have a barrier that you can only be a member if you have 400 members in your organisation, which is often a very difficult task for the immigrant organisations. There was one newspaper article I read from a Danish newspaper which said that foreigners should be forbidden to use mobile phones, because usually they make phone calls outside of the country and then do not pay their bills. The Danish representative for the national youth council was distributing this newspaper to everybody. He was also claiming, in all sincerity, that Arabic people, especially Palestinians, are not organised, they do not want to be involved in voluntary work. And I see that both as an accusation and as a way of discriminating against people.

**Mr. DMITRIJEVAS**

After the collapse of Soviet Union, it turned out that I also became a migrant, a second generation one. The first problems appeared when everyone who had come to Lithuania without being of Lithuanian origin was considered as migrant, even worse, as occupant. We had to face all the problems we talked about today, like racism and discrimination. Nowadays we have started to divide people in categories, including the migrant category. In my opinion the word migrant should be crossed out and we should start calling them simply 'people'. We should give people the same rights no matter what religion or nationality they are. The emphasis should be put on the rights of human beings, not of migrants. And now I would like to give a small example of how we try to preserve our rights in Lithuania. We founded a political association, which I now represent, the Russian Union in Lithuania, and for a long time we were trying with no effect to win places in the parliament. As it was a very difficult process we made a coalition with a progressive social-democratic party and consequently we entered into the parliament. It gave us a lot of possibilities, for example, the right to education in Russian language. Starting from our initiative, we founded two universities/ Baltic-Russian Institute in Lithuania and a branch of Moscow Economic University. I would also like to note that about 10-12 per cent of Lithuanians also attend classes at these universities. But a great part of radical politicians in Lithuania still demand – I use their words – the cleansing of Lithuania from influences of different nationalities.

**Mr. CILEVIČS**

I don't think that the situation in Denmark is really worse than in other Council of Europe member states. I believe in fact that it is better than in most Council of Europe member countries. So, Ronni, you set very high standards, and you are right to do so: we should be more critical towards our own countries, and above all this should be true for politicians. Because I guess if some NGO representatives wanted to say something similar about my country Latvia, there would be plenty of material with which to do it; but he would be declared enemy of the people and of the state. Everybody would agree with Ronnie's proposals, the

problem is how to implement these general principles at the level of national legislation, at the level of international mechanisms, of monitoring, of control, of enforcement if necessary. Also, most measures put forward in the electoral debate will never become law because they would be contrary to lots of Council of Europe standards. And furthermore Denmark is a EU member state, and the EU has such an important mechanism as the Race Directive, which must be implemented within two years. As for discrimination, yes, these things happen, both in Denmark and otherwise, but this is exactly why the Race Equality Directive has been adopted. Because the burden of proof lies on the employer in cases where discrimination is alleged, not only in the field of employment but also in other fields. So, the situation of these people you mentioned is not hopeless, it is just a matter of how skilled they are, and how skilled NGOs are to protect them. My last point is that even 88% of the population is of non-Danish origin this does not prevent successful integration, because all these people do not come from the same country, they are of different backgrounds, speak different languages, have different cultures, they belong to different races after all. So what is their common language? What language is used in municipal institutions? What language do they use amongst themselves? It is Danish. So, in my view this is a very important consideration: integration should not be understood in irrational terms, it is a cultural thing, and different origins do not prevent cultural integration.

**Mr. DANIELI**

I believe that what Ronnie told us about his country is not confined to his country. I believe that racism, violence, intolerance and the terrorism which since September 11th is going to change everything, indeed everything has already changed, because there is a reduction in liberty and in human rights, even in fundamental rights. We are now going backwards, and it is essential to reflect on the significance of the term 'foreigner'. It takes a long time to achieve integration and multi-culturalism with mutual understanding between men and women, rich and poor. In the previous government in Italy I was vice-minister for foreign affairs; that government was very concerned about the integration of foreigners into Italy, but the current Italian government have a much more restrictive view. This is not the case only in your country or in mine, but a general trend in all western countries. In my previous capacity, I was also responsible for the interests of Italians living abroad throughout the world. Since the nineteenth century, 25 million Italians have left their country. Today we have a situation of discrimination involving Italians as well as Moroccans or Algerians or Nigerians. Italian boys living in Switzerland or Germany today face the same situation you have described: they will have to attend schools which are not the same as those of citizens of German or Swiss children. Today, there are different schools for Italians. In the world there are four million Italians living abroad, 50 million people who are of Italian origin, almost four hundred national parliamentarians of Italian origin including many ministers and presidents of republics, including the president of the Republic of Malta. It has taken a long time to achieve integration of Italians, but still now some Italians abroad refuse integration or are refused.

**Mr. ABERGEL**

In order to move in the right direction it is important that we focus our strengths on how to implement solutions. Legislation is important but you also need control. I know it is not popular to quote Stalin, but "Confidence is good, but control is better": in the sense that in my country legislation against discrimination is not really working. The law has been implemented, but it was written in such a way that it does not work. And we have not really put any effort into promoting the positive contribution of immigrant groups to society. The only reputation they are getting is for crime, for trouble, for demonstrations in the streets. They are not getting any positive publicity at all, and this is creating a very negative picture. It is fundamental to monitor and investigate cases of racism and discrimination, as I know that the

European Council is already doing. We also need to put serious pressure on companies to eliminate discrimination, reversing the burden of proof is not enough because the young man who makes the application does not take the step of going to the authorities to find out why he did not get the job. He does not even go to the job interview, and if you do not even go to the interview you cannot get the feeling that you were rooted out: you just don't hear anything. So it is quite difficult to prove anything, or at least to put the pressure on the employer. Also NGOs are not really joining forces to protect all of the migrant groups, they are protecting only their own group and their own interests. I would suggest that the Council of Europe and others who are interested create a European 'respect' campaign, much like the 'All different, all equal' campaign, but even stronger. A positive profile campaign that visualises for the population of Europe the very valuable contribution from the migrant groups, and also emphasises the respect that we have for each other.

**Ms. SEREDA**

The whole discussion here is devoted to the problems of Denmark, but you should know that those problems are not real racism, they are actually minor problems if compared with the situation in Russia, where there is real racism. If you come to Russia and you have dark hair and bushy eyebrows, you are presumed to be a criminal because this is what people from the Caucasus look like. This war in Chechnya – I know it is a very difficult problem to discuss – causes a great deal of problems. In Russia, people who look Caucasians, are called names and cannot get a job, they can't get a home, they cannot earn proper money, at least not legally. And in Russia we have these so-called cleaning operations, when any policeman can stop a man in the street, a man who looks like he is from the Caucasus, and take him to the police station for no reason. The police officer will not be punished for that. And although much was said about using the mechanisms of our own countries to protect these people, the thing is that in our country most of these measures, these laws, are issued by the government, and as a result I am afraid that nothing can be done; because in our country Nazi parties are allowed, we have several Nazi parties and they are active, not forbidden; the only restriction is that they cannot operate in Moscow, but in other regions they can do what they want. So whilst Russia is a member of the Council of Europe, in our country the situation is terrible. And NGOs and young activists can do nothing, because the measures they take are nothing in comparison with the activities of the state. And it is something terrible and I am just addressing those politicians and other people who have power and authority, maybe they can tell me what can be done, whether there is anything that can be done in this field, because we are trying to do lots of things, we have different projects, we have different organisations and actions and things like that, but they are ineffectual because of what the government does.

**Mr. BAYRAMOV**

Sometimes the minority violates the rights of the majority. I would like to show it with the example of my country, Azerbaijan. After the collapse of Soviet Union there was a big flood of Russian speaking persons to our country and as a result there started to be a big discussion upon their rights to education. Finally many Russian schools were founded, but this had some negative effects on Azeri children. In these Russian-language schools the Russians make up 20 per cent of the students, while the rest are Azeri. However, the programmes of these schools include only Russian literature, history and language. When they finish school, Azeri children do not know the language or culture of the country they live in.

**Ms. PISCOPO**

I also wanted to comment about language. It is strange that someone lives in a country for twenty years and doesn't even try to learn the language, does not speak it at all and only speaks to their children in their native tongue. At the end of the day you are living in another country,

you shouldn't expect the other country to conform to you, but you should maybe try to do something yourself. I sometimes find with migrants, unlike minority groups, that they expect the majority to conform to them rather than vice versa. But pro-activeness is important. We mentioned respect: it is like the nationals of a country respecting the migrants, but then the migrants also must respect and do something to integrate themselves into the country in which they are living.

**Mr. KASO**

Nobody has spoken about the situation in Hungary. The minister of youth and sport said that the Hungarian government is doing a lot in this field of protecting migrants and Hungarians outside Hungary. But the problem is in the general perception of people: I come from the Ukraine, so people in Hungary do not see me as a Hungarian, although I am ethnic Hungarian. They see me as a Ukrainian, and it sometimes offends you, because whilst the Hungarian government tries to defend and protect me in my country, the people in Hungary sometimes do not consider me as one of them.

**Mr. PANIZO**

I am from Spain and I was a student there, and I must say that I got a very good education but something was missing. Never in my education did I get information about other countries, about other cultures. I mean we received notions on different religions and ways of living, but we never had a whole lecture on how life is in Turkey, for example. I think this can be why many young people do not accept other cultures. People do not accept what they do not know. After school I became active in an NGO which gave me the chance to visit many places and be in contact with many different cultures, and I think that it is by means of mobility that we can dismantle people's prejudice. I think that we should ask governments to co-operate more in to promote youth mobility.

**Mr. HORDIES**

After September 11<sup>th</sup> there is a concrete risk that, in the fight against terrorism, fundamental human rights of people are violated only for the colour of their skin, their ethnic origin or religion. This is the moment to reaffirm strongly the principles at the basis of the Council of Europe, if we do not want to provoke an escalation of violence.

**Mr. LE GUEN**

I agree that it is necessary to reaffirm the principles of human rights and the rule of law, with policies and campaigns at all levels. It is necessary to co-ordinate social and education policies. For instance, children should be learning the language of the host country before they reach the age of primary school. The legal system should be changed. Nowadays in Europe citizenship depends on descent rather than birth in the country. The example of Germany, which has recently changed its legislation, should be followed. It is necessary to fight against religious discrimination, and it is a fact that in most countries some religions have more rights than others. It is also necessary to fight against political parties which make of racism one of their banners.

**Mrs STOISITS**

In my opinion immigrants fight for equal rights whereas ethnic minorities fight for particular rights. Both of these groups fight for laws protecting them against discrimination, and even physical violence. And so my conclusion from this afternoon's discussion is that if there is one need in every country, it is the need for legal mechanisms and for legislation on the national and the European level to protect people from discrimination.

**Ms. AIMIUMI**

I agree that there is a need for national legislative measures to protect immigrants from discrimination, or we will be coming back here discussing the same issues in forty years. I am an immigrant who pays taxes, but I am not protected against discrimination. I am an actress, and although people pay me complements after performing, they also say that my sisters are all prostitutes, which is insulting. What is needed for projects to succeed is the direct involvement of immigrants. I am only asked to come and perform after things have been organised, and I say no, because they should have told me about it before; I don't just want to perform, I want to speak about my problems. Immigrants should try to learn and be productive. Black men are taken to be drug dealers and delinquents; black women are taken to be prostitutes. People are suspicious of you; old ladies think you will steal their bags. But immigrants do not care about learning languages, they only want to go and work and then return home. Three or four months ago I was asked to a presentation event for a Nigerian writer. When I was there I had to act as interpreter for the writer because he did not speak Italian. I asked him why and he said that because of the discrimination and rejection he did not want to stay. Finally, about terrorism. I am against terrorism, but I am also against violence and we cannot use violence to punish violence. I do not want the current situation to work against immigrants, who were equated with danger and prostitution and are now equated with terrorism.

**Mr. ZVIAGUINE**

I would like to comment about Maria Sereda's intervention: it was hard for me to hear all those negative opinions about our country. I would like to balance what Maria said explaining in Russia there is a serious problem with criminal structures which recruit young people, because they are dissatisfied with their situation.

**Ms. SOCHIN**

I would like to tell about the situation in Liechtenstein. Maybe the situation is different because the country is very small, having just 35 000 inhabitants. We have four different groups of migrants. The first group is people from Switzerland or Austria, so no one looks at them as immigrants, everyone looks at them like another Liechtenstein. The second group are people from Spain and Italy, they came in the 60s and they are here now in the second or third generation and the young people are integrated. The third group are people from Turkey and Yugoslavia: the Turkish people came also in the 60s, the people from Yugoslavia came with

the war. And the fourth group are people from Africa and South America who are in small but increasing number. I think the biggest problem in Liechtenstein is that you have to have the right name to get a good job and to have a good life. This happens also to me because my family name is Russian. The scariest thing in Liechtenstein is that the young people are increasingly attracted to the neo-Nazis. And the worst thing is that the government does nothing against that, even if they are responsible for acts of violence and discrimination.

*What is needed for projects to succeed is the direct involvement of immigrants.*

*A young participant*

**Mr. ABERGEL**

In my closing remark I would like to mention 'the human library', something that we did at Stop the Violence during a large open air festival for young people. We offered a library, made up of real people, each of them representing a book. We said: come and borrow your worst prejudice for two hours. And if your prejudice was a Muslim, you borrow a Muslim. If your prejudice was an Italian, you can borrow an Italian, and if you were prejudiced about homosexuals, you could borrow one homosexual person for two hours and talk to them, and find out what you feared is not as dangerous as you thought. Knowledge is actually the tool here, to know about each other rather than just suppose.

**VII. TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEINGS**

*(Rapporteurs: Mr. Marc HORDIES, Belgium and Mr. Robert KASO, Europe Student Association, Ukraine)*

*Co-chairs: Mr. Attila MUTMAN, Turkey and Ms. Sonia AIMIUMI, Centro Interculturale della Almaterra, Italy*

*Introduction: Mr. Bruno MOENS, vzw PAYOKE, Belgium and Ms. Argentina SZABADOS, Chief of Mission with Regional Functions – IOM Budapest*

**Co-chair Mr. MUTMAN**

I am very pleased to welcome you to the second day of the hearing on the specific situation of young migrants. Yesterday we had the opportunity to discuss some important issues, such as integration, training and education. We also addressed the particularly thorny issue of violence, racism, intolerance and terrorism. Today we will address another important and delicate issue: human trafficking. In recent years the Council of Europe, in particular our Parliamentary Assembly, has devoted a great deal of attention to this problem, adopting a series of recommendations. Our committee has initiated or contributed to the drafting of many of these documents. I would particularly like to mention recommendation 1325, adopted in 1997 on the trafficking of women and enforced prostitution in Council of Europe member states. In this recommendation the traffic in women was stated as representing a form of inhuman and degrading treatment, and a flagrant violation of human rights. Four years later our committee has been called to give an opinion to another committee, on equal opportunities for women and men. Mr Hordies will be the Rapporteur. He is also the Rapporteur for this section of the hearing, and I am sure that what is said here today will contribute to his work. I would also like to mention recommendation 1526, adopted in 2001 further to a campaign against trafficking in minors, intended in particular to put a stop to the east European route, for example via Moldova. For this section we will have two speakers: Mr Bruno Moens, Belgium, and the representative from the International Organization for Migration.

**Mr. MOENS**

I would like to draw on your knowledge, on your intelligence and on your expertise to help me answer a few questions for which I do not have an answer myself. I will not give you a lengthy description of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings, but I will go straight to some problematic issues. There is no unique and immediate solution to this phenomenon; any solution must be a long term one, and it must be a multi-faceted cocktail of options. There is criminal policy and the humanitarian aspect; but there is also a moral aspect. Let's look firstly at criminal policy.

There are some repressive means that may be employed; and repression, in the form of penal action, is necessary if you want to tackle criminal networks. But in order to formulate criminal policy you need a definition of trafficking. You also need to provide particular penal sanctions. European states do not have a common, workable definition. There are no adequate provisions to cover the whole phenomenon of trafficking, and therefore neither is there tough penal sanctions in place. This allows trafficking to remain a very profitable business.

Following the European Council's joint action of 1997, the Vienna plan of action and the conclusions of the European Council's summit in Tampere, the European Commission has worked out a framework decision on combating trafficking in human beings, which provides,

*inter alia*, a common definition and penal sanctions. Along with this framework decision are two draft documents: there is a draft for a directive, and there is a draft for a framework decision, both regarding the definition and the prevention of facilitation of unauthorised entry, residence and transit.

Here comes my first question: what do you think of the following hypothesis? Strengthening of immigration laws is counterproductive in preventing the trafficking of human beings.

By this I mean that if you strengthen migration laws closing channels for legal migration, you will push people into the hands of traffickers.

And attached to this I have a second question: do you think that strengthened and stricter immigration policies are compatible with the fundamental human right to migrate, which is guaranteed in the universal declaration of human rights?

In order to complete the whole package, two weeks ago the European Commission at the EU Forum for the Prevention of Organised Crime produced a draft proposal for a directive. This draft mentions access to residence in the host country for victims of trafficking, and also for victims of smuggling, which is quite progressive.

And here comes my third question. Do you agree with this approach? In the draft proposed by the European Commission residence is conditional upon the victims' co-operation with the authorities in order to identify and apprehend the traffickers. If you do not collaborate with the judicial authorities, you will not be granted a residence document, whether you are a victim or not.

Here comes my fourth question: do you think that access to residence should be granted to all victims of trafficking or only to those who co-operate with the authorities, and also, should there be an attached obligation for the victim to undertake a reintegration programme? The residence permit foreseen by the above mentioned draft is a short term one: it will cover only the duration of judicial investigations.

My next question is: do you think that a residence permit for victims who collaborate with the judicial authorities should be short term, or should it have a permanent duration, for example in cases where the traffickers are prosecuted successfully? Attached to this residence procedure – and again this is very important – the European Commission has stated that victims of trafficking may have some basic rights attached to residence, for instance access to employment. Do you agree? Human trafficking, and its solution, also implies a moral aspect.

My question is: do you think that the legalisation of sex work is a valid instrument to combat trafficking? And if so, do you think that visas should be issued for migrant sex workers?

**Co-chair Mr. MUTMAN**

Thank you Mr Moens, we will try to answer your questions. And now I would like to give the floor to Ms Argentina Szabados of the International Organization for Migration. IOM has worked very hard on the problem of trafficking, putting a lot of energy and commitment into studying and into implementing programmes to combat the trafficking in human beings, especially in eastern Europe and the Balkans. Please: the floor is now yours.

**Ms. SZABADOS**

First of all I wish to talk about the definition, because that is an important issue to be considered, and there is a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the terminology connected to trafficking.

So what is trafficking? If you look at the research and at the definitions and terminology used by governments you will find a wide range of descriptive terms such as alien smuggling, trafficking of aliens, illegal immigrant smuggling, human trafficking, trade of human beings; also human commodity trafficking, human trade, trafficking in human beings, trafficking in persons. But you should bear in mind that potential differences in approaches to dealing with human trafficking arise depending on which terms are used. So far there is no precise globally agreed definition. Is it a form of illegal migration? That is an open question.

A distinction between trafficking and smuggling can be made: in trafficking there are elements of exploitation, and this is emphasised in the terminology; whereas in smuggling, an individual requests assistance in crossing into another nation state, so it is more voluntary in nature. However, by placing themselves in the hands of smugglers, even if voluntarily, individuals cede control of their fate. So they too may be considered victims of trafficking.

I believe that the question arises as to whether the term 'trafficking' should be applied to all illicit and criminal trading in human beings, or whether it should refer primarily to women and children. I believe that in the case of children and minors trafficking is the term we should always use, instead of other terminology like smuggling or organised crime. Trafficking in children is an old phenomenon, as is trafficking in women. But its nature has changed in recent years because of globalisation, because of tourism and also because of technical developments.

It has been estimated that there are five million trafficked children worldwide. Now according to UNESCO and UNICEF, a growing number of children are being trafficked from eastern Europe and Russia. In Russia, for example, it has been estimated that there are three million so-called street children, although the basis of this figure is not clear. These are groups which are potentially vulnerable to organised crime, since they have no social status, economic status or future in the licit economy, nor do they have skills other than basic survival skills. Then there is the issue of recruitment techniques: how do traffickers get to these children? They get to them through abduction, often through sale by families and by bogus adoption agencies, and through false promises of work. Now the pull factor is the markets, which create the demand; and the push factor is poverty, and cultural attitudes which sometimes play a part.

Children are desirable commodities, not only for the sex trade as was mentioned – and I am sure that the discussion today will be mainly on sexual exploitation. But it is important to mention that they are also trafficked for other reasons, for instance the removal of their organs, tissues and other bodily materials; they are exploited as labour, and so are put often put to work in factories and sweat shops for very little if any pay; and they are sometimes deliberately injured and maimed so that, when begging, they elicit maximum sympathy. There is a dawning realisation that little data is available, not only in the case of trafficked children and women, but in general as regards trafficking of migrants but why?

One problem is that collection techniques differ from country to country. Another obvious problem is that the individual is reluctant to identify him or herself. But the problem is also related to that of definition. If we consider the victim as a culpable part of organised crime,

would that victim then also appear in the statistics on trafficking of children? Or if we put the person in the ‘smuggling’ box, would they appear in the ‘trafficking’ one? An important question which has yet to be resolved.

And obviously that requires multilateral co-operation; furthermore there is a lot that can be done by the NGOs, and their work in this area should be very much supported. A number of conventions, conferences, and other meetings within Europe have been concerned with trafficking, and accordingly there has been a wide range of official resolutions and recommendations relating to the fight against trafficking.

My organisation, IOM, has been taking an active role in implementing a series of these recommendations through humanitarian programmes. These programmes aim to prevent, to assist and to protect the victims. I want to emphasise that throughout more than ten years of experience on working on counter-trafficking programmes, it has been clear that prevention is one of the most essential elements and can form the basis of sustainable programmes. I would like to draw your attention to a final report which is now available on the mass information campaign in Hungary intended to raise awareness of trafficking in human beings.

*My message is that individually we may not be able to save the whole world, but we can save a whole world for an individual – and so figures should not deter you.*

*A representative of an international organisation*

I would also like to mention another programme started in Hungary and in Bulgaria, to put the subject of trafficking in the curriculum of secondary school education. The topic of counter-trafficking, which can be taught together with anti-drug prevention programmes or anti-alcohol, should be a part of the official curriculum. This can create a sustainable programme which will raise awareness from a very young age. It is a modern programme, financed by the European Union, which we would like to have not only in the candidate states but also in the member states. Such awareness raising should not be undertaken on an ad hoc basis, but should be systematic and more regular, as it will thus become more self-sustainable.

A couple of young people from around this room have shown me how very motivated, interested, and active they are in the field of young migrants, and I am sure also in the particular field of trafficking. You have now heard the figures: five million worldwide, three million in Russia; and you must ask yourself, “How many trafficked young children could I help – ten, twenty, a hundred, one thousand? But I could never help a million.” So my message is that individually we may not be able to save the whole world, but we can save a whole world for an individual: and so these figures should not deter you.

#### **Co-chair Ms. AIMIUMI**

Thank you very much Ms Argentina Szabados for a very good introduction. Before I give the floor to speakers, I would like to add some things, because I am an immigrant from Nigeria which is one of the countries, I may say it was one of the first countries to be involved in the trafficking of women. What I would like to remind people is that the age of these young women is between thirteen and thirties, and they are brought in particularly from an ethnic minority which is called the Edo. And these are the poorest people as well, the people who cannot defend themselves; they do not even have money to buy bread to eat. Neither can they go to the police to report, because they are really very frightened of everybody.

What was missing in your speech was about the clients that want these women. Should we not remember them as well? Are they not participating in this trafficking? Are they part of this situation, or are they outside it? This is another question. What kind of security should be

offered to women who denounce the traffickers? For instance in Italy now, there is a new law on this issue on which basis women who denounce that traffickers are granted a residence permit. But on the residence permit it is written that they are ex-prostitutes. With this, as you may expect, it is almost impossible to find a job.

#### **Mrs TORRADO**

I am from Spain. Nowadays my country is a major destination country for immigrants from North Africa, especially Morocco. Very often they arrive by little boats called *pateras* and find a job in the agricultural or construction sectors. They are subjected to various human rights violations and especially exploitation. The most concerned group is that of women, who are exploited for sexual purposes.

#### **Mrs WIERSINGA**

My first point is that trafficking and smuggling are very different. Both are exploiting people: that is the common element. The difference is that in trafficking there is personal humiliation and trauma, a loss of bodily integrity: it is slavery. Women’s organisations, and women in general, resist the coupling of trafficking and smuggling, because it detracts from the humiliation and the slavery aspect of trafficking.

My second point is whether residence permits should be linked to unconditional co-operation. I participated in a Council of Europe seminar on trafficking in Italy, and we were told that in that country the woman’s security, ensured whilst she is co-operating with the court procedures, can be revoked at any time should the judicial system think she no longer to be of use. Well, that is a further form of exploitation that the woman experiences: either you protect her or you do not protect her, but you cannot only protect her for so long as she is useful to your system. So this is something which cannot be supported.

My third point relates to another question which was posed: whether sexual work should be legalised or not, and whether that would help to combat trafficking. Now in my country, the Netherlands, we have legalised voluntary, but not involuntary sex work. The official reason is to improve the situation of women who are working in this field. But on the ground the feeling is that the real reason is to minimise the burden on the neighbourhood. Whatever the case, it makes the women more dependent on the owners of the place where they do their sex work. If it is meant to improve women’s situation, there should be research from the start into whether this improves women’s lot.

In Australia they legalised sex work many years ago. And the University of Victoria did research on the effects. The effect was that it made the situation more exploitative and that the situation of women was worse than before. The only positive thing was that there were fewer murders of prostitutes, but the working conditions of the women were worse. One of the reasons was that women do not have the money to buy the premises where they do their work, so they are dependent on the owners of the houses and on the rules the owners make. It also suddenly makes the owners of the brothels into respectable industrialists, so to speak, and visiting brothels became an acceptable thing to do; it even became an outing for businesses to go there openly together. But anyway, whatever measures are taken, all measures should be accompanied by research from the start into the effect of the measures. My fourth point is that provision of information about human rights to sex workers is very important. This information should be given in the languages that those women understand. In my city, we as women’s organisation have requested this, and the city council has complied and in their workplaces there is information in the languages of the women concerning their human rights, what they can do when these rights are violated, where they can report.



*I think that it is by means of mobility that we can dismantle people's prejudice.*

*A young participant*

And wherever they report there is also somebody who knows what to do with those reports. Now my last point is the moral aspect. You mentioned it, but you did not go into depth with it. In resolution 1325 there is a recommendation that the users of the women who are trafficked should also be penalised. It is very strange that in most countries it is criminal to buy a stolen car which you know is stolen, but if you buy a woman who you know is trafficked, this is not a criminal act, because a woman is not a good. So this is what was recommended in this 1325 resolution. But the ministerial committee did not include it in 1999, they left that out.

Now this again brings me to the demand side. We have a demand side which comes mainly from men. When there was a social summit in Copenhagen some years ago they had to fly in the women to service the participants of that summit. And it is my feeling that the men should talk to each other, among themselves, about why they do this, why they take away the dignity of women: women cannot do this. And it is the men's side that has to be solved.

#### **Mr. HANCOCK**

I think we miss the point time and time again about the hopelessness that so many people, millions, hundreds of millions of people in this world certainly find themselves in. Just to give one example: at a recent meeting of the Council of Europe, it was suggested that in Italy alone there were 10 000 young girls from Moldova working as prostitutes or sex workers, a third of whom were underage....

If you look at the statistics in Italy for the number of men who have been arrested and charged and sentenced for sex acts with under age girls, you will find that the number is well under a hundred. ... Now if you look at what twelve and a half million sex acts a year, or 10 000 young girls from one country produce in income, it comes to nearly half a billion dollars a year. Now if you imagine what a half a billion dollars would do to the economy of Moldova, or the opportunities it would give to young people in Moldova, you start to see where hopelessness is a very big issue to resolve: the hopelessness in Moldova is about lack of opportunity, it is about giving hope through education and then taking it away because there is no employment opportunities at seventeen or eighteen.

I agree entirely with our Russian friend who said that the state has a responsibility. But many states deny that responsibility, many politicians deny that this is a problem; we in the United Kingdom have for a long time denied that this is a problem. I am in favour of legalising drugs: I would rather see heroin addicts alive than dead through using badly contaminated heroin, if kids want to take ecstasy, I would rather see that ecstasy commercially produced in safe amounts which give the buzz without the harmful effects.

I do not know whether it is right or wrong to legalise sex work, but the experiment in Australia is not so bad as what our colleague from Holland has to say. If you look at recent studies in Australia, they would suggest that not only has crime gone down, and the safety of the sex workers has improved, but also that they operate in a more legitimate situation. Why, if somebody chooses to sell their body, should it be seen as being a permanent stigma?

Why should a former sex worker in Italy, coming from Nigeria, have her profession stamped in her residence permit as 'former prostitute'? I find that appalling. I would dread the thought, if I ever lost my job as a politician, that someone stamped in my passport 'former politician', because there can be very few things worse than being a 'former politician': it makes you virtually unemployable.

But the real issue here is that states do not accept their responsibilities in this matter.

And the Council of Europe is a classic example of trying to look both ways. Five hundred metres from the hemicycle of the Council of Europe literally dozens of young girls from Albania, the Balkans, Russia, the Ukraine will be selling themselves for sex along the canal. And the Council of Europe and the Strasbourg authorities do nothing about it: we sit in the hemicycle talking about trafficking when it is going on outside the very doors of the Council of Europe. I suggested to the committee that we should invite some of these girls into the Council of Europe, sit them down, pay them for their time, and ask them to tell us to our faces what it was that brought them to the streets of Strasbourg to sell their bodies. Unless we try to understand what motivates some of these people to put their lives on the line, not just in moving from one country to another but every time they have a sexual encounter; what is it that motivates them to do that? And unless you understand what is behind that, you will never be able to solve the problem.

#### **Ms. YASSIN**

I would like to start from Mr Moens' questions. I won't suggest answers but I can say something about the problem we are facing in Italy, in more concrete terms. These girls are already discriminated against in their everyday life, can you imagine what would happen if they had stamped on their identity document 'former prostitute'? These girls are mistreated all the time, also in their contacts with the police, so I think the police should be trained to have a humane attitude towards these women.

I am tired of being stopped by the police in Italy suspecting that I am a prostitute. And if they realise that I am not, because in my ID it is written that I am a student, they are kind of shocked because they have this prejudice that all black women in Italy are prostitutes. It is also important to focus on the clients. There is a demand, that is why women are also exploited. Something else we should focus on is, why do we see naked women in every entertainment show or every advertisement; why do we have to exploit women and fail to respect their dignity and not see them as human beings but as objects. I think we really need clear legislation, and I think that politicians need to accept that these women must be rescued and that they have the right to have their dignity restored. Another question that Mr Moens, should we give the visa to the sex workers? I cannot give an answer, because I often think that it would mean legalising slavery. That is something that I would like to hear feedback on.

#### **Mr. WILKINSON**

In my judgment the problem of the exploitation of young women, and the trafficking that goes with it, can be very easily minimised by the correct application on a strict and regular basis of existing procedures of immigration control. Sex trade in my country is illegal, in as much as living off immoral earnings and the organisation of prostitution are illegal activities with severe penalties. Prostitution as such is not illegal, and nor should it be, because quite clearly it would be a fundamental abuse of individual rights and I think we are agreed about that. But the trafficking in young women is illegal, as is any trafficking and any avoidance of immigration control. In my country to obtain a work permit – from a non-EU country, of course – you have to have a clearly defined job to go to and the employer has to explain what the function of the applicant will be, and normally the work permit will only be granted if the employer cannot have that job fulfilled by a British national. So as organised prostitution is illegal, and as it is not the kind of activity for which a work permit could be provided, all that is required is that the immigration authorities do their job properly.

Now there are two complications: First, on the continent, the Schengen agreement means that once somebody gets into the Schengen countries, it is very difficult to ensure that the person

is removed, since there is the ability freely to cross national borders. And we all know that that makes immigration control infinitely harder, because the common frontiers of the Schengen area are not equally difficult to cross, and there are places within the Schengen area where illegal immigrants and those who traffic in illegal immigrants know that the frontier can be penetrated. So either the Schengen agreement itself has to be reviewed, which I would not regret myself but it is a policy and the member countries have got to decide whether that is the right thing to do; or at the very least, it must be applied uniformly and effectively.

*"Young migrants are not a problem, they are an opportunity and richness for the European societies we all belong to".*

*A young participant*

Secondly, the question of seeking to alleviate or hopefully to eradicate the problem in the countries from which these young people come. That is very difficult to do. As for the exploitation of minors, well quite simply, a sex trade in people who are not adult or not of age is an offence. If this offence is eradicated by strict police measures, the problem can be greatly diminished. There is one fundamental and basic problem which underlies all of this, and that is of course the abuse of the asylum system and that is something that the Council of Europe is pursuing

and we have ongoing reports in this area, and it is a continuing aspect of our work. So I would say that at first sight, the problem seems difficult and we are all much anguished by the moral dimension and the personal pain and grief that are caused. But if, as member countries of the Council of Europe, we apply sensible policies, in many instances existing policies of immigration control and of police action, properly and effectively and with resolution, then I do think that this evil can be much minimised and a great deal of suffering can be avoided. So I am not depressed, I am not pessimistic as many people are in this seminar: I think it is up to us as politicians to have the will to co-ordinate our action as members of the Council of Europe, to ensure that we put in place the measures necessary and then enforce them.

#### **Ms. BASARAB**

The only time I am ashamed of saying that I from Moldova is when I have to admit that Moldova is a country suffering the effects of corruption and criminality. But applying stricter immigration laws in western Europe means that it is too hard to get a visa to go and study in any of those countries.

I come from a village, but luckily I have had the chance to see the world, to learn, and I have been able to be open and to gain more and more knowledge. But there are so many other young people there that, due to electricity cuts, the inadequate budget for the national television, and many other problems, are simply not aware of their basic rights. That is where we should start. Everyone says that education is power, knowledge is power, but we need to develop it there

#### **Mr. BRIGHIDIN**

I also come from Moldova, and I agree that the situation there is very difficult. First of all I think we should focus on legislation: until July 2001, Moldova still did not have established legislation regulating the trafficking of human beings. The notion even did not figure in the legislation. In July this law was adopted, but it is still not perfect. The parliament has adopted it, motivated by the fact that something had to be done, but still the situation is complicated because there is no protection mechanism for witnesses: a lot of victims usually prefer not to report the abuses that they have suffered to the police. There is evidence that trafficked girls have not received adequate education. 47% of them have finished only primary school. Non-governmental organisations have a special role to play here: they should be given the necessary financial resources to enable them to raise awareness in this field. Evidence also

shows that about 60% of trafficked women are from rural areas. This means that there is a lack of awareness in the villages. The police could also play an important role.

#### **Mr. CONNOR**

I just wanted to say something in relation to the rather difficult questions raised by Bruno Moens, which referred to the attempts by the European Union to come to terms with this problem. No country in the world, it would appear, is going to have open borders which allow the free flow of people in and out, and especially those who are coming looking for work or who would be a demand upon scarce resources. And this is a reality which is brought home to us by the result of the recent Australian election. It would appear that two or three months ago the incumbent administration in Australia was far behind in the opinion polls. Yet the administration used the immigration issue apparently flagrantly, with the outcome that they won the election. And that, of course, at the end of the day, was a manifestation of public opinion in a country with values that we think are like our own in Europe.

In my own country I can see this quite easily: I remember in the 1997 election, where in certain constituencies the migration/ immigration issue was used nakedly and blatantly by certain people, and it won votes for them. Mr Moens asked one question in relation to the people who are the victims of trafficking, and this being a requirement in relation to the common law of the European Union: victims of trafficking having to co-operate to obtain even temporary residence in the country where they find themselves. I had some experience of this, in what I did for another committee of the Council of Europe, the Equal Opportunities Committee, being a Rapporteur on domestic slavery, and that of course related by and large to trafficking, because the victims of domestic slavery.

Leaving aside the issue of it being a condition of their getting temporary residence, I would say that people should co-operate with the police and the judicial authorities because they are victims of a crime. Every country in Europe has some legislation on its statute books that makes trafficking in human beings a crime. But the biggest problem the authorities have in nailing traffickers is getting the evidence that they are traffickers. I mean we all have the basic principles of the rule of law, that you do not prove a case against anybody until you have incontrovertible evidence, and if there is a doubt, even a trafficker gets the benefit of the doubt. But the greatest thing that will convict anybody of a crime is a witness who was a victim of the crime. That is extremely important. We will never succeed against traffickers, which is a huge industry in the world, unless we convict more of them.

#### **Mr. BAYRAMOV**

In Europe trafficking became more widespread after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This post-Communist trafficking is different from that committed, for example, by Chinese organised crime groups. In Asia poor families sell their girls because they don't have money to educate them, to find a job for them, but in the post-Communist case, it is a little bit different, because many prostitutes have education and many of them they have even graduated from universities, but yet they sell themselves. And I think that to educate these people is not enough to solve this problem.

#### **Mr. MOENS**

I just want to give some comments on what Mr Connor said. Personally, I also agree that the issuing of residence permits for victims should be linked to co-operation with the judicial authorities. I want to stress that there is this draft now for a residence procedure within the EU member states which says very clearly that issue should be linked to judicial co-operation. But if it is only this that we can offer, then the victims will be suffering anew, it will again be the

victim who is victimised. So I really want to make a plea to those politicians who are from EU member states, to ensure that human rights and dignity are ensured for everybody, including victims of trafficking.

#### **Mr. CILEVIČS**

Frankly I cannot agree, because at least on paper these standards are there, these human rights are there, and we should rather speak about abuse, because we all know that human rights are universal, they cannot be denied to anybody. The Council of Europe of course does deal with human rights, the whole organisation is about democracy and human rights, but other international organisations just use human rights rhetoric and do not deal with human rights.

*I believe that this seminar became for us parliamentarians a good school, with lessons that will help us to understand the problems of young migrants in our everyday work.*

*A parliamentarian*

And this is why it is not surprising that this or that politician sometimes says something similar to you. But this does not mean that the situation is the same; and in fact it is the task of you NGOs to be a watchdog here, you must keep a close eye on how these procedures are implemented. In a sense our committee is doing the same, for instance I could refer to one report recently prepared by our committee on compliance with human rights standards of deportation procedures for those asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected, prepared by our Swiss colleague Vermot-Mangold, which is based on very detailed information collected from many countries: believe me, this report is not political. So we do deal with this problem.

#### **Mr. HANCOCK**

I am always amazed when people talk about human rights, and somebody specifically mentions human rights for sex workers. I do not know what that means. I do not know whether a sex worker has a greater entitlement to human rights than anyone else. What I do understand, certainly as far as the Council of Europe is concerned, is that all the member states have signed up to honour the pledges of the Council of Europe and to uphold what it stands for, which means that every citizen in those countries has human rights which must be protected by their country. And the failure is that countries do not honour their commitments to the Council of Europe which, in a rather complacent way, allows them to remain members.

Where there are blatant violations and a blind eye turned to human rights of , they have completely lost track of reality on the question of human rights. And so at the end of the day, human rights are there; it is the politicians who fail to deliver on the commitments that they signed up to. And I just want to give some statistics about trafficking, about one individual; it is, with the greatest respect to the young lady from Moldova, once again a case study of a young lady from Moldova. When she moved for the first time in a trafficking chain, from Moldova to Kiev in the Ukraine, the money that changed hands was between fifty and one hundred dollars: the initial fee.

When she moved from Kiev to Romania, the value of that young lady had gone up from one hundred dollars up to between two and three, perhaps as much as five hundred dollars. The next move, from Romania to Turkey, brought her value up to nearly a thousand dollars. And when she was finally transferred from Turkey to Paris or to Antwerp, her value was two and a half thousand dollars. Now that one case study on that one young lady took place over a six-month period. So you can see the sort of money and the numbers of people that are involved in a chain of trafficking, and each one of those people was, I believe, involved in a criminal action for which nobody, or very few people, are ever punished.

#### **Co-chair Mr. MUTMAN**

I thank all of you for your contributions. To conclude this section I would like to remind you of some comments and suggestions that I have found particularly important. First of all, education. As we said several times yesterday, education is fundamental to create tolerance and mutual respect. Personally I share the idea that information about the shameful trafficking and exploitation of people should be included in school programmes. The aim of this hearing is to propose concrete solutions, and that is a very viable one. I also found particularly important the suggestion to train police officers on the problem of trafficking. Our committee has often stressed the importance of providing police and immigration officers with appropriate training in human rights. I think that special programmes for police officers should be established, to enable them to understand this complex phenomenon which raises a number of issues concerning human rights and above all the dignity of the person.



## VIII. THE SPECIFIC SITUATION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

*(Rapporteurs: Mrs Zdravka BUŠIĆ, Croatia,*

*2nd Vice-chair of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography and Mr. Andrei BRIGHIDIN, League of Defence of Human Rights, Moldova)*

*Co-chairs: Mr. Csaba TABAJDI, Hungary*

*and Ms. Mariam MATEVOSYAN,*

*Youth Department of the Red Cross Society, Armenia*

*Introduction: Ms. Mara GEORGESCU, Save the Children, Romania,*

*Member of the Advisory Council of the European Youth Centres and*

*European Youth Foundation*

*and Mr. Jean-Claude FORGET, Senior Regional Legal Adviser for Central Europe, UNHCR Branch Office in Budapest*

### **Co-chair Mr. TABAJDI**

As a former Secretary of State for national minorities living in Hungary and for the Hungarian minority living in neighbouring countries I would like to give you a short overview concerning my country. There are almost 10 millions inhabitants and 1 million of them belong to national minorities. It is especially the Roma community who is the most numerous (half a million). Hungary is a medium size immigration country. There is immigration from Asia and Afghanistan. At the moment there is a protest against the Afghan asylum seekers in the country and this issue is going to become a major topic during the elections. Following the end of the first world war, 3 and a half millions Hungarians found themselves outside Hungary. When we speak about migration we speak mainly about immigrants of Hungarian origin who have come back and are looking for a job. There are difficulties but the language is common. In Hungary there is a large Chinese community of 20 000- 30 000 people. Their situation is not clear because they cannot be considered as a traditional national minority and are not included in the list of the 13 national minorities. After this short introduction I will give the floor to our speakers.

### **Ms. GEORGESCU**

I shall make a short introduction on the theme of unaccompanied minors, which I think is a very tricky theme. And why so? Because it has been little addressed in the past and now raises many problems, especially for young people but also for the host country. The first question

to which I would like an answer is who exactly are these young people, these minors who are migrating? Some of them are refugees whose families died in conflicts and who must travel alone in a refugee group. Others are leaving their countries for economic reasons. Some others are migrating because they are separated from their families or have been adopted. Furthermore trafficking is a big issue today, but we have already discussed this. These minors form a very special group, because they are alone, they don't have families, some of them are not integrated into any group. And they arrive in the host country, and their legal, political and economic status is not very clear. There are many social problems that arise from the migration of unaccompanied minors: the problem of citizenship; they do not really have a social status, most of

*We are all the time talking about education for migrants, but we should also look at ourselves; maybe it would be good to introduce into the education systems of our own nationals something about foreign cultural backgrounds.*

*A young participant*

them; and no material support; and, which I think it is essential, the fact that they do not have a family around them. The psychological and physical well being of the child separated from his or her family is in danger. Improving the situation of a migrating minor presupposes co-operation between two or more countries. In my organisation, "Save the Children", we have a project which deals with the situation of a minor who is left somewhere in, say, western Europe, and must return home. I can tell you that there are a lot of problems with bureaucracy and legislation. You get to the point where you tell yourself that you could just leave this case, because there is no solution. We must think about these differences in legislation, and what could be done about them. A recommendation I would like to suggest is that every international convention on human rights contains specific provisions dealing with unaccompanied minors.

### **Mr. FORGET**

It is crystal clear that, these days, Europe can be said to have been for decades a major point of attraction for migrants from the rest of the world, for a variety of reasons: its economy, respect for human rights, prosperity, democracy, due respect for the rule of law, a number of things that were not shared by so many other countries around the world. The point is that, in the mid-70's, the rules of the game changed dramatically. Europe, step-by-step and more and more, started tightening its borders.

Many deterrent measures have been put in place to prevent foreigners getting into Europe, and increasingly so since the central European countries and Baltic states have showed interest in joining the EU. Also these countries, at the request of the EU, are tightening their own borders, so that step by step the borders of the EU will shift to Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and so on, so that their neighbours, Moldova and Ukraine, and so many others, will be on the other side of the EU border. If I mentioned the tightening of the control at the borders, it is because the more such measures are put in place, the more traffickers are brainstorming on how to get past them.

We all know that those who forge bank notes are continually obliged to exercise their imaginations in fabricating bank notes, because it is increasingly difficult. Traffickers are in the same situation now. When it comes to separated asylum-seeking children, to a large extent their case is comparable to adults seeking asylum. However, their specific situation is in some respects different and even more difficult. Now what is problematic is that despite all the talk about this particular category of asylum seekers there is one particular piece of information dramatically missing: who, and how many, are they?

I prepared a few statistics: within the central European countries and the Baltic state the main receiving country is Hungary. Is it because the Hungarian authorities managed to set up a system whereby they are in a much better position to collect information? Possibly: this remains to be checked. But the point is that, out of 7 800 applications for refugee status in Hungary in the year 2000, 1 170 were lodged by separated children seeking asylum: in other words, 15%. This is a rate that is shared with only one EU country, the Netherlands; here again, are the Netherlands a country that is more sophisticated than any other in the EU?

The point is, also, irrespective of the numbers, their situation is calling for attention and for remedies to whatever is endangering their physical integrity and other human rights. Now, we are talking about people applying for asylum.

May I just, in a few words, remind you of the definition of a refugee. This is because we are used to reading in the newspapers such things as "economic refugee" and many other terms

which are misleading. We would prefer to talk about refugees, not 'political' refugees. A refugee is a person who crossed the border of his or her own country of origin, who fled because of his or her well-founded fear of being persecuted as a result of his or her political opinion, religion, ethnic background, nationality or membership of a particular social group, and cannot return to his or her own country. If I insist on this particular last part of the definition, it is because whatever reason was the cause of the departure of an economic migrant, even if the back home will not be that bright, he or she can return without putting in danger his or her freedom or physical integrity.

But that is precisely one of the major difficulties encountered in dealing with children applying for asylum. It was said, just before I took the floor, that there could be reasons linked to family problems, there could be problems originating also from war situations; there could be many more reasons for the children leaving their country. But once they are at borders, they should be able to get access to the territory of the country where they would like to apply for asylum.

In that respect, as opposed to others, not only their command of foreign languages is likely to be less than that of other asylum seekers, but in addition they are on many occasions afraid to approach police officers. One could say that adults may have been briefed by traffickers on what to

*We are absolutely convinced that it is not only the State's intervention and the strengthening of the institutional system, but also the non-governmental organisations' capabilities which should be expanded, because by that much could be achieved and a great deal contributed to solving and improving numerous social problems.*

*A Minister*

tell police officers, if only in order to avoid their immediate deportation. Children are likely to be in a much less protected situation. So access to the territory is indeed a concern to UNHCR, because we are the only agency mandated by the international community to protect refugees. But access to asylum procedures is a further step in which they are encountering difficulties, to get protection. They face difficulties in having a guardian appointed, because they cannot articulate by themselves what they should tell the authorities, in particular if they are *bona fide* asylum seekers. Very often there is a problem when it comes to registration: there is a lack of co-ordination between the national authorities in gathering the data, so at some point they can be lost. I am talking about central European countries and the Baltic states, but not long ago I was watching the TV here about France and in particular Charles de Gaulle airport, where it was said by high-ranking police officers and the manager there that a huge percentage of separated minors applying for asylum are just lost once they pass out of the international space at the airport.

They are issued with a temporary residence permit valid for eight days for them to get to the prefecture. And this is at the time when traffickers are catching those kids; next thing they are in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris. Detention is also something that is also very high among our concerns. All central European countries have adopted asylum laws which are increasingly in accordance with the so-called EU *acquis communautaire*. May I take this opportunity to say this: being in accordance with the EU *acquis communautaire* does not necessarily imply meeting recognised international standards, so there is one more step to be taken for those asylum procedures to be in accordance appropriate criteria.

But to come back to detention, it is fair to say that, in all asylum laws in central European countries and the Baltic states, detention of children applying for asylum is, at least by law, not seen as a solution; rather, they are transferred as quickly as possible to places that are not necessarily ones of pleasant freedom for children, but at least they are not left in limbo as to

some extent is the case at the Paris airport. But this does not solve the problems in identifying guardians who will represent the children before the authorities, particularly those dealing with asylum procedures. Another issue of concern is with children applying for asylum in central European countries whose parents are either asylum seekers or recognised as refugees in EU countries. One would think that this would be the end of the problem of the child concerned: far from it. It can be a long legal battle before the children are together with their parents. There are even children who are like ping pong balls, moving from one country to another such as between Poland and Germany to name two. And at the end of the day the situation of such children is not improving by any standard.

Now I will just propose you some kind of shopping list of issues of concern. For instance, interviews of separated asylum seeking children. In too many countries, and this is not specific to central European countries and the Baltic states, interviewers often do not have the proper skills to conduct an interview with a minor. Nor would there necessarily be a female interviewing officer dealing with female children, although we all know, as with female adults, that for a variety of reasons it is preferable to have a female interviewing officer. Some of these are obvious, such as the cultural background of the asylum seeker, and the facts to be put forward in the application which could not easily be disclosed to a male interviewing officer. What about durable solutions when it comes to these children? Should they, though not recognised as refugees, be returned to their country of origin? One would think yes, indeed, it is likely to be in their best interests, but that may not be the case.

We were talking earlier about fleeing conflicts: article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights will prevent the return of those children to such situations, therefore there must be a system established in asylum countries in order to cope with these children. Here again, the situation in central European countries and the Baltic state is to a large extent comparable to that in the EU countries; ironically their situation is in some respects better than in all too many EU countries. Integration: yes, but here again we are talking about education.

If I could also take the case of France, I was reading a story in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, published a few days back, saying that the authorities were coming to realise that even though France is a country that is used to migration, they were not in a position to cope with the increasing number of children of foreign origin arriving without any command of French. This problem is not new. Settlement in third countries; where there can be no viable solution in the country of first asylum, there may be a need for the child to be resettled in a third country. The textbook tells us that it is possible, but firstly there is a need for resettlement countries to open up their arms to such cases – of which there are not so many, by the way – and to do so more quickly than is the case today. Let's bear in mind that the longer the child remains where he or she is, the more detrimental it can be to her well being.

What next to add to this already rather long shopping list? I expect that from the debate here, we can reach some kind of recommendation that would allow the politicians, and I turn to the members of parliament here, to incorporate reference to human rights and in particular those concerning asylum-seeking children in all regional instruments, as previously suggested. We appreciate that European countries are states of law. But speaking as a lawyer it is much better if guarantees are put in writing in international instruments, in order to avoid any further misunderstanding in the future when it comes to the application of those instruments.

#### **Mr. CILEVIČS**

I have just two questions to Mr Forget. The first is about guardians. In practical terms, if parents of these children are not known, or it is known that they were killed in conflicts or whatever, who is the guardian who represents them? Is legal counsel available for him? How

are these problems resolved in real life? The second question is about this ongoing streamlining of the asylum legislation in the EU candidate states. Just two years ago I was Rapporteur for this committee on the delicate issue of restrictions on asylum in the EU and Council of Europe member states. My conclusion was that the *acquis communautaire* itself was not always fully compliant with the Geneva Convention.

Since, it is still possible to affect the development of the EU common asylum policy, UNHCR is working very seriously with the EU candidate states in order to improve their asylum legislation, but in the meantime, there is a certain, let's say, not pressure, but let's say persistent advice on the part of the EU which does not always comply with the views of UNHCR. So to what extent could the UNHCR's point of view prevail?

#### **Mr. FORGET**

It is true that all asylum laws in central European countries and the Baltic States do include a provision concerning guardians. However, what is to some extent left in limbo is how to select them, what should be their skills, what should be their role, and these are a wide range of issues left with question marks, at least in law. Therefore, legislation should be passed in that area. Or there should be some kind of *ad hoc* arrangement worked out in order to make guardianship really efficient and effective. This is one area where, in particular, our UNHCR branch offices, together with the national authorities as well as with those NGOs that deal with asylum seekers, are doing their best to harmonize standards.

*Integration is a feeling of belonging to the community; and this requires a change in attitudes and opinions which starts with education in schools.*

*A young participant*

The second issue you raised is indeed a very sensitive one. I would not go so far as to say that UNHCR is in open conflict with the EU, not at all. And thank God the communication between UNHCR and the EU institutions is much more conducive today than, I would say, in the past for a better understanding of our respective positions, for the sharing of concerns and proposals to achieve, at least in principle, the best in the interests of *bona fide* asylum seekers and refugees. That said, it is fair to say that there are discrepancies, but we are used to putting those in the public domain once they are formalised: until then we prefer to work behind the scenes, but

in a non-confrontational manner. And there are – yes you are right – there are discrepancies, but there are subjects where there used to be many discrepancies and where today there are far fewer.

If I just take the case of the draft directive on the definition of a refugee: the document that is today under discussion is much closer to the UNHCR position than in the past. And just to single out one particular element, the non-state agent of persecution issue is not yet fully in line with the UNHCR position, but we have moved ten thousand steps forward towards a common interpretation. So it is not that there is a brick wall between UNHCR and the EU institutions – not at all – our dialogue is ongoing.

But should we focus our discussions on the EU institutions rather than on the EU candidate states? I would say no. No, because whilst we are operating in EU candidate states, we are also operating in so many other countries, such as those that are either the theatre of refugee crises or their neighbours. It is actually on the basis of an agreement of two years ago, the so-called PHP on asylum issues, that the EU and UNHCR are working together in the central European and Baltic states in order to promote the establishment of fair asylum procedures. Today the EU is focussing on a different matter: migration. This is an area of concern to

UNHCR, because it is likely that as a result more attention will be paid to the control of borders, the tightening of borders, and this is likely to impact on the ability of *bona fide* asylum seekers to get to the territory of the central European countries and the Baltic states.

#### **Mrs BUŠIĆ**

One of the questions that really concerns me, as you mentioned very quickly is what happens when a child get separated from his parent and both of them apply for asylum but in different countries, for instance one in a EU and the other in a non-EU country.

#### **Mr. FORGET**

Firstly: age is a matter that is very delicate, and in particular when the child is between sixteen and eighteen. There is no scientific methodology precisely to determine the age of a human being, and certainly not that of a child.

Secondly, I was referring to identification as an issue. If you are dealing with a child who is six or seven or even older, but who left or was separated from his parents many years earlier, he or she is unlikely to provide fully reliable data on his or her parents. The memory of the child does not work in the same way as that of the adult, so that there could be discrepancies between whatever is put forward by the child, and what might be cross-checked in the third country against the purported parents. Even if a link is established, what remains to be established in a reliable way is whether the child is the child of adult A in country B. And that is why interviewing children is a very difficult and time-consuming exercise which requires some skill to be carried out properly; otherwise, although the child may have sufficient information on his parents, if he is not properly interviewed this data is likely to be lost and thus the child will never be reunited with his parents. So age, identification, and interviewing are among others three of the issues that must be dealt with in a proper way.

#### **Ms. ALARCON**

I read a book written by some Belgian journalists about some children in Ceuta. It is one of the ports of entry into Europe and obviously there are unaccompanied minors, both asylum seekers and simple migrants. There had been human rights violations against these children, namely ill treatment at the hands of the Spanish police. This led to legal action from some police authorities against their colleagues. Sometimes it is the police staff, or the staff having to conduct interviews of children are not properly trained. In a place like Ceuta police must be prepared for this situation, they must be given the instruments to do their job. The same can be said for the interpreters. I know there is a proposal within the EU about reception conditions, which also includes provisions about this.

#### **Mr. WILKINSON**

Ms Georgescu stressed the importance of eliminating differences in legislation for the treatment of refugees within our countries. Without such harmonisation there is bound to be unequal pressure on particular countries, and this leads to an adverse reaction by the peoples of those countries which is damaging not least to asylum seekers.

The question of the brainstorming, as Mr. Forget so dramatically put it, that is being undertaken by traffickers, on how to get through the immigration control barriers of the European Union. I must say that I am anxious that the Schengen agreement is perhaps producing a new iron curtain within Europe.

If immigration control was organised on a more national basis, then I do think that countries could produce policies better tailored to their own situations, and this could in fact be helpful

to ease the stresses and strain that are inherent in the applications for refugee status, and I would like Mr. Forget and perhaps Ms Georgescu to express what they feel about that.

And then a related issue, the question of the Dublin Convention. Mr. Forget said that asylum seekers should be able to get access to the country where they wish to apply for asylum. But we all know that the Dublin Convention is explicitly designed to prevent that happening, in as much as an asylum seeker must have his application processed within the first European Union nation state to which he arrives. And this must also, I think, militate in favour of that individualistic approach, if each country is able to decide for itself. And then two final issues. The difficulty of finding guardians to represent under-age asylum seekers: are there effective charities to do that? In my own country we have an organisation called the Children's Society, but I think in most countries, and even in my own, it is very difficult to find public spirited people who are willing to undertake this extremely important work.

And lastly, on the question of settlement in third countries, for those who have their applications refused: by what criteria are decisions made as to which third country such people should be sent?

#### **Mr. FORGET**

There aren't clear figures about the number of unaccompanied children in Spain, including Ceuta and Melilla. There is a need for the registration of these children in a proper way so as to give information on their bio-data background, age, origin, gender etc. This is by the way something that we are promoting here in central Europe countries and in the Baltic States, and hopefully something that will also be implemented in EU countries, so that if we were to meet again next year, it should be possible to report such data concerning children, including in Spain.

Regarding misbehaviour by officials, I am not in a position to comment. It is fair to say – and this point is not specific to Spain – the skills required from interpreters and interviewing officers are definitely a key factor in properly adjudicating an application for refugee status lodged by a child, as much as by an adult.

*It is very strange that in most countries it is criminal to buy a stolen car which you know is stolen, but if you buy a woman who you know is trafficked, this is not a criminal act, because a woman is not a good.*

*A representative of a women's organisation*

Mr Wilkinson, you are definitely right: in law, asylum seekers today, since Dublin was adopted and in force, no longer have the right to choose their asylum country, save in a few unusual cases. So if I said, where they 'wished' to apply, I was wrong. Because to use the words of so many journalists and others, we are not that in favour of 'asylum shopping' by asylum seekers either, but there must be shared responsibility of the states in coping with asylum applicants and refugees.

For the sake of the debate, it is important to know that the great majority of refugees are not in Europe but in developing countries. These are the countries that are assuming the responsibility for the accommodation of millions of refugees.

Today we are talking very much about Afghanistan: just to put things back into perspective, we all know now, because of the present crisis, that there were some two million refugees from Afghanistan in Iran and about the same number in Pakistan. What would have been the reaction by the French authorities when looking at 2 million refugees arriving at their borders within a few weeks? Guardian difficulties: charities, why not? And actually they are already very much involved in dealing with that. They are very

strong allies in dealing with that issue, but still the law should provide for the possibility to identify charities as potential guardians. Resettlement in third countries: yes, from the central European countries and Baltic States as well as from the EU countries. If family members, parents are, let's say, in the United States, why should the minor remain in the UK or France or Hungary? His place is rather together with his parents, if the family link is formally established. This is the possibility of resettlement. Resettlement is otherwise based on protection, not for reasons of convenience.

#### **Mr. Luis YÁÑEZ-BARNUEVO**

Unfortunately I have to leave early this afternoon and I will leave it to my colleague Mariam Yassin to present the general report. I would like to mention a concept which has already been repeated several times and with which I fully agree: immigration is not a problem, on the contrary it is an opportunity: the demographic situation of Europe makes it a necessity, but above all it represents richness for our societies.

The Council of Europe will continue to fight against intolerance and racism, in the promotion of human rights for everybody. I would also like to remind participants that the main findings of this hearing will be included in a report of our Committee to be presented to the Parliamentary Assembly. I thank all the participants and those who have contributed to the organisation of this event.

## IX. CONCLUSIONS

*Co-chaired by*

*Mr. John CONNOR (Ireland), Chair of the Sub-committee on Migration  
and*

*Ms. Antje ROTHEMUND, Executive Director, European Youth Centre  
Budapest*

### **Co-chair Mr. CONNOR**

This is the final session of the two day hearing and I want to say that personally I have learned a lot during these last two days, I have found the experience of working with you, all of you, very rewarding indeed. There are many people here with us over these last two days, there are parliamentarians and youth representatives, at times there were at least a hundred people in this room, and all of you have the history and the experience, many of you a wide experience, in migration. And I particularly appreciated that they shared with us their personal experience with the audience. After my colleague Mrs Rothemund's final address, the group of Rapporteurs will summarise the main findings of this hearing. I think that it is very important to put forward concrete proposals, so that parliamentarians can work for these proposals to be adopted at national or at European level. As was said several times during these last two days, principles are very important; but a lot more important are implementation and action. I thank you for all your very informed and very important contributions, and I invite you all to stay with us until the end of the meeting, and to participate in the final debate which will follow the Rapporteurs' summaries. And now Mrs Rothemund: you have the floor.

### **Co-chair Ms. ROTHEMUND**

Thank you very much, Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, I had the pleasure to speak at the very beginning of this activity yesterday morning. It is only one and a half days ago, but I have the feeling that since then a lot has happened in terms of communication and exchange in this group. In bilateral discussions I had with many of you during the two days here at the European Youth Centre, I could state that this exchange was full of contradictions, as is often the case both in a national context but probably even more in a European context.

We live in a big Europe, we live different modernities. We live similar realities but from completely different perspectives, and we live different every day realities in our immediate environment. We also respond to different levels of information concerning the subjects that we discussed here.

Some people said to me that there had been some repetition, that they had heard things before, and I think that it is clear, because we have never been together in a composition like that. We have not been together in a group where we had so many parliamentarians and so many young people discussing for such a long time subjects of mutual concern, in particular our subject the situation of young migrants.

Repetition is also part of education, and so education is and it will always be repetitive. And I suppose policy making is as well, because the moment you think you have achieved something, within a couple of months or weeks you have to revise it. We have considered this activity of co-operation with the sub-committee on migration as the beginning of hopefully a constructive and long-lasting co-operation.

We have talked a lot about the involvement and the participation of young migrants and young people in general in the discussions and in the consultation processes that leads to political

decision making. And I hope that this activity was an opportunity to start from where we are, and that this participation and consultation can continue on this level in future.

I would like to thank once again the committee for taking this initiative and hope that you have not regretted it. I would like to thank the young people for entering into this experience which was for some of you strange, for others more familiar in terms of set-up, and I would also like to say that we would like to see you here again at the European Youth Centre Budapest which is, as you know, a venue for a diversity of activities of the Council of Europe and also for your committee meetings: I would like to extend the invitation and if you feel that you would like to come back here you would be welcome any time. Thank you.



### **Co-chair Mr. CONNOR**

Thank you very much, Mrs Rothemund. And we now move to the report of the Rapporteurs to the meeting, and for a general summary of the Rapporteurs.

### **Mr. CHRISTODOULIDES**

Let me express my deepest thanks and gratitude to the young participants, and I believe that this seminar became for us parliamentarians a good school, with lessons that will help us in our to understand the problems of young migrants in our everyday work. I will summarise the main points that were raised during the debate on participation and integration of young migrants. Integration can be achieved only providing equal opportunities and possibilities to the young migrants in their new country. The second point: integration is a long lasting process, during which the authorities must prepare society to accept the newcomers. Education, religion, civil society can play a significant role in the preparation of local communities. At the same time, migrants must be prepared to accept the new conditions in the country in which they find themselves; they must respect the new way of living.

Migrants, in this period, must throw away the idea of a spiritual, cultural and housing ghetto and try and feel as one with the rest of the inhabitants.

Third: political, civil and human rights must be granted to migrants according to the European and international conventions for protection of human, social and other rights, and of course in accordance with the local legislation and constitution.

Fourth and finally: national parliaments, the Council of Europe and the European Union can play significant roles in the achievement of these goals.

### **Ms. SEREDA**

As Mr Christodoulides said, integration is a very long process and takes time, so we must be very tolerant and patient. The measures taken with a view to integrating immigrants must not be aggressive, because pressure from the authorities can cause nothing but protest. Then we should not forget that an immigrant who comes to a new country need not break his connections with his homeland, and integration does not mean assimilation. And every person has the right to keep his own traditions. And the final point is that integration depends to a large extent on the personal approach of the individual: we have to ask the question, whether a person wants to be integrated, because if he does not, there is nothing to be done until he has made this decision.



**Mr. AHMED**

I would like to mention the main problems that have been at the centre of the debate for the issue of education and training. First of all, the language. Many migrants do not participate because they do not understand the language of the country where they are. On the other hand, the native population does not know the language of the migrants, and this is a cause of suspicion and mistrust. Furthermore, there is the problem of the image of the immigrant population which is presented by the media. As far as propositions are concerned, it is necessary to establish a permanent dialogue with young migrants, at all the levels of education and training. It is important to set up and reinforce cultural exchange and inter-community relations since the youngest age. School is a good tool for this. Given the foreseeable number of immigrants that Europe will host in the next decades, it is of the utmost importance to sensitise and prepare society to understand and interact with foreign cultures and civilisations, especially those of migrant communities. In school programmes, space should be given to the history of migrant communities and their countries of origin, preferably from their own perspective.

It is necessary to foster and promote the universal values of tolerance, mutual respect and human rights at school. The teaching of religion in schools should be voluntary. It is necessary to develop in young people a critical approach to TV programmes and sensitise schools of

*How will you successfully integrate a group that feels it has nothing to lose?*

*A young participant*

journalism on migration issues. Finally, it is necessary to reinforce co-operation between society and the education environment. Migrants should participate and express their opinion in all the projects that may concern them in the field of education and training. Education and training are important elements to develop the willingness of taking responsibilities. Respect is based on knowledge of the other.

**Ms. ALARCON**

Education programmes should aim at fostering cultural exchange and enable the native population to know the culture of immigrants as well as immigrants to know the local culture, so that they do not develop a racist attitude against the society where they live. The image of immigrants which is provided by the media is just negative. This should be changed also providing appropriate training to those who work in the media sector and sensitising them on cross-cultural issues. It is necessary to work to obtain better protection for immigrants through the establishment or reinforcement of appropriate legal instruments, in particular those which are intended to prevent discrimination in access to employment and reinforce education, as well as accompanying measures which facilitate social inclusion.

**Mr. KASO**

There is a lack of reliable information on the exact number of people who are affected by trafficking and most figures are only estimates. States should co-operate to cast a light on this phenomenon and harmonise their statistics. What are the ways of preventing trafficking in human beings? Going to the root causes and create better economic conditions in the countries of origin would be a first step. It would also be necessary to circulate more information about this new form of slavery.

There are cases where women from rural areas were cheated, but also women with sufficient educational background are sometimes trapped. Education on respect for victims of trafficking and prostitution and on tolerance in general should be provided to police staff and customs officers as a matter of priority. Residence permits for victims of trafficking who co-operate with the authorities should be issued for a longer period of time, not only for the period when the victim is useful for the justice system. All children who are involved in sex labour are to be considered as victims of trafficking.

**Mr. HORDIES**

I would like to add just a few remarks that were made during this session. Given the difference in legislation on prostitution and trafficking, traffickers can continue their business and subject people to exploitation and slavery. Too strict immigration control measures, which close legal migration channels, will have the consequence of pushing people in the hands of traffickers. The Council of Europe should be particularly concerned about the trafficking of children and women from Moldova, as well as the situation of street children in Russia, and should take action on these issues. As an international organisation, the Council of Europe should also reflect on the link between rise of prostitution and humanitarian interventions of international agencies.

**Mr. BRIGHIDIN**

The situation of unaccompanied young migrants is a very specific one, because this is the most disadvantaged and vulnerable group. Unaccompanied minors include refugees; children separated from families; those who left for financial reasons; and trafficked children. A lot of issues were mentioned and among them I can mention the following: the status of unaccompanied minors is not clear. Officials lack training on how to deal with asylum applications involving children, including at the interviewing stage. Also, there is a lack of co-ordination amongst national authorities in getting the necessary data. It is difficult to identify the children. There is a need for harmonised regulation about the appointment of legal guardians and their duties. The co-ordination between institutions working in the field is much more conducive to progress today than it was in the past but there is room for improvement. A clear reference to the rights of unaccompanied minors should be included in all the instruments for the protection of human rights.

**Mrs BUŠIĆ**

I too would like to thank all the participants for their input, which to me personally were very enlightening and also educational. Both of our introductory statements on the topic of minors were, I would say very informative, and I personally found them emotional. Emotional because they dealt with children who are actually wandering around looking for their place under the sun. And informative: I think few of us were aware that so many young people are without guidance, without a sense of belonging, and really without any future. And they, unfortunately, become an easy prey of the unscrupulous hunters, those traffickers who would do anything for their own gains. But before they are hunted by these merciless people we really must act. We are all responsible, they are our children, they are children of tomorrow's Europe, and Europe really needs them badly because we heard yesterday and today that Europe is getting very old, so we need those children. One of the most important issues that I would single out is the people who first come in contact with these children, especially immigration officers in charge of interviewing them. I will end by quoting Mr Wilkinson: "We need more public spirited people;" I really like that term. And I hope that we will all become, at least we who attended this conference, more public spirited people and we will also teach others to become so.

**Ms. YASSIN**

Thanks to all the Rapporteurs. Also my final report is the result of co-operation between a parliamentarian and a young participant. Mr Yáñez had to leave and apologises for not being here. As I said before, in these two days we shared ideas, realities and proposals, but there were some principles that were raised repeatedly, and I will go briefly through them.

First of all, young migrants are not a problem, they are an opportunity and richness for the European societies we all belong to. We should rather be open and not scared and see the richness and opportunity we can get from the meeting and gathering together of people from different backgrounds. Participation is about access to society on the political, social and

economic levels, and it is the key to integration. And migrants, especially young migrants, must be included in the decision-making processes, and their perspective has to be included in integration policies, so that their needs and their aspirations and dreams can be heard. For it is they who have to adapt to the new societies, so it is important that they are the protagonists of this process. Education was constantly raised in our discussions. School programmes should be widened to include teaching of other peoples' histories and cultures since racism, intolerance and xenophobia are often caused by ignorance. Training is fundamental for young migrants and for those working with young migrants, especially for police and immigration officers and social workers.

I think that we had a unique event, where two groups of people, young people and parliamentarians, who do not often meet so it was a great opportunity and we shared ideas, realities, proposals, on a specific issue, an important issue such as the specific situation of young migrants in Europe. I believe that today we had a great chance to build Europe together, respecting our differences. I think that the Council of Europe and the European institutions are doing important work, focussing on migration issues, and I would like to take my personal experience as an example. I was trained, three years ago here: Ms Rothemund was my trainer on a long-term course on participation and citizenship for young minority youth leaders.

And I am here again today, and also Hassan Habib and Sonia Aimiumi who attended this course, and the fact that we are here today is important, and it is a concrete example of how things can work out. I would like to thank you: the Council of Europe, the parliamentarians, and especially the organisers. It was a great experience and I think we are the multipliers: we are the ones who have to carry this message to other people, so it is important that the youth representatives act as multipliers in their own realities working with young migrants and pushing forward the ideals of equality and intercultural learning. It is also important that the parliamentarians act as multipliers, bringing this important message to their colleagues. Thank you very much.

**Co-chair Mr. CONNOR**

Thank you very much Mariam. May I also thank each and every one of the Rapporteurs for their work and for the comprehensive reports they gave at this final session. My own final remark is that the migration sub-committee, which I chair, will urge European governments to adopt laws protecting people against discrimination, and we will ask the Council of Europe to organise a new campaign to foster respect for difference. As a parliamentarian, I think that the most important achievement of this hearing was the opportunity to discuss the issue with so many young people, young people with expertise, people who work with migration and who are experts at the whole area of this very important issue on this continent at the present time. Now ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to introduce the minister of the interior of this country, Mr Sándor Pintér.

Mr Pintér, you are warmly welcome here, you have come here to give us the closing address of this particular hearing which has lasted over the last two days.

Our hearing was opened yesterday by your colleague in government Dr Tamás Deutsch, he gave us a great insight into the policy of your government and your government's work in relation to this major issue of migration in your country which we understand is a receiving country for many migrants and a country of transit for many migrants. It falls within the ambit of your duty, as home affairs minister as we would call you in my part of the world, to deal with this very difficult and often very controversial issue.

## X. CLOSING REMARKS

**Dr Sándor PINTÉR, Minister of the Interior, Hungary**

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Republic of Hungary, may I welcome you all to this conference. I would like to thank all of the organisers for providing the necessary facilities. It is a special honour for me that Hungary and Budapest can host this conference because I consider it to signify an appreciation of Hungarian migration policy. I am sure that the past few days, during which you have been discussing important issues, have been useful and fruitful for you.

Young asylum seekers, their problems and their integration into the societies of receiving countries, raise and cause great concerns for everyone. The sharing of these problems can contribute to their successful management. The previous speaker has already mentioned that communication and co-operation can help to improve Europe. I can only repeat this. We have also achieved a great deal through such communication for a better Hungary, and have thus helped to create a better and more peaceful Europe.

The Hungarian asylum and refugee administration is focussing on the problems of young people, with special attention to unaccompanied minors, whose number is increasing significantly. Mr Chairman, you have mentioned that Hungary is no longer only a transit country, but it is now also a receiving country; this is indeed the case. The increasing number of migrants concluding their journeys in Hungary includes minors, and unfortunately a great percentage of those are unaccompanied. The reason for this is that their parents or relatives have remained in other places, or that some terrible thing has happened to them. So therefore we are obliged to respond appropriately, and to consider that this problem is both understandable and manageable. But it is not only objective circumstances which exacerbate the situation, it is sometimes due to a lack of co-operation and willingness and to the unreliable provision of data. The Hungarian parliament has adopted a new refugee act package and I am proud of the fact that the Hungarian institutions and legal system are today giving more and more emphasis to providing good living conditions for young migrants and promoting their integration into society. This package of acts is already fully harmonised with the EU *acquis*: a fact which can be measured against the standards of the UN and the EU, and also against moral standards.

Children who have already been granted refugee status are obliged to attend school. Young immigrants can learn Hungarian, they are introduced to new friends when starting school, meals are provided and they also receive grants for their higher education; whilst in Hungary, they receive important assistance from the UNHCR for which we are grateful. In accordance with present legal provisions, asylum-seeking children are not obliged to attend school; however, at the Ministry of Education we have initiated a change to this rule and as of January 2002 will introduce a new amendment to this law. Furthermore, this amendment will provide a full range of health services to unaccompanied minors, who will be accommodated under proper institutional arrangements, and we will also pay for their educational expenses. Among young migrants, those who have already received residence permits constitute a special group, and we also considered their needs when amending the legal provisions. We have proposed that they have similar access to public education services as Hungarian citizens. By this group we mean those people who have received residence permits or who are here together with parents who have residence permits, or who are legal migrants. And if these non-Hungarian citizens have reached their eighteenth year and have been staying in Hungary for more than a year without their parents, then on the basis of reciprocity they may take advantage of public education services under the same conditions as Hungarian citizens. So our main purpose is to integrate these young people into Hungarian society as quickly as possible. We are working on the development of this policy; we are trying to create a network of co-operation; we are

trying to find internal, domestic solutions to these problems by adopting the successful practices of other countries.

Due to Hungary's particular history, it is a fact that over five million ethnic Hungarians live outside Hungary. If you consider that Hungary itself has a total of ten million inhabitants, this represents a high number. This ethnic minority, living outside Hungary, may ask for Hungarian citizenship; 70% of immigrants come from this group. So we have not only to ensure the integration into society of legal immigrants from this group, but also that those who live outside the borders of Hungary can have a good quality of life. We must realise that the problems relating to migration may be managed not only by working towards their integration, but that equally important is to create an environment in their country of origin such that those people do not feel compelled to leave. This can be achieved by social, economic and cultural changes in those countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must also mention that migration is also increasingly burdened by the illegal activity of trafficking in humans, which is closely connected with organised crime. Illegal migrants, especially minors and unaccompanied minors, are very vulnerable: they are often forced to pay additional costs for being smuggled to the West, and very often they are transported under inhuman circumstances, often leading to illness and death. Neither is it unusual that these young people are forced into involvement in illegal activity and organised crime, including prostitution and drug smuggling. Unfortunately racism and related problems are now in the foreground, as a result of recent events in the world. The Hungarian government and parliament totally despise the terrorist attacks; however, the efforts that have been taken to intensify security may not be in accord with international agreements on migration. To successfully combat and eliminate racism requires the support of the children who live alongside immigrants; bringing up children from different countries together can be an effective method, because children are more open and receiving to new experiences when mixing with children of other races.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am absolutely confident that this conference has contributed to the understanding of young migrant-specific situations and has also made clear the kinds of danger awaiting the victims of the trafficking in humans involved in illegal migration. I can assure you all that Hungary and its government is doing everything in its power to combat this phenomenon. Hungary lies on a cross-roads of various routes: for over a thousand years Hungary has been a receiving country; the difference with previous periods is that nowadays legal migrants are integrated into Hungarian civil society, with the power to vote such that they contribute to the election of members of parliament. In the opening speech you were given a quotation from our first king, in which he said that when various nations and cultures live together in a country, this enriches the life of the nation. I believe wholeheartedly in this.

I thank you very much for contributing to the success of the current event and I hope that the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Hungary can put to good use what has been elaborated here, and that we can do so for the sake of the young migrants. Thank you very much for your attention.

**Chair Mr. CONNOR**

May I, in conclusion, sincerely thank you Minister Sándor Pintér, Minister of the Interior of Hungary, for coming along to close our conference here this evening. Like your colleague Minister Deutsch, who came to open it, you too have given us a comprehensive insight into the policies of your government and the concerns of your government into the issues that this joint hearing was about.

The organisers of this hearing, the European Youth Centre Budapest, and the Migration Subcommittee of the Council of Europe, which is a sub-committee of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography deeply appreciate the fact and the recognition given to our hearing by your government, by sending two members of cabinet. to this event. We are sincerely grateful indeed, and the message it gives us is that this country at least takes very seriously the issues that we were discussing here these last two days.

That, ladies and gentlemen, brings to a close our hearing. I want to thank all of you who participated and who came, many from very long distances of course. Many thanks everybody and good bye.

## XI. APPENDICES

### Programme of the Hearing

#### THURSDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2001

- 08.30      **REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS**
- 09.00      **OPENING OF THE HEARING**  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mr John CONNOR, Ireland, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migration  
Ms Antje ROTHEMUND,  
Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest
- WELCOME SPEECHES**  
Dr Tamás DEUTSCH, Minister of Youth and Sport, Hungary  
Mr Mário MARTINS,  
Director, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe  
Ms Mariam YASSIN, Women from Minorities
- 10.00      **INTRODUCTION**  
*(General Rapporteurs: Mr Luis YÁÑEZ-BARNUEVO, Spain, and Ms Mariam YASSIN, Women from Minorities)*  
Round of introduction  
Exchange of expectations to the hearing
- 11.30      **PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION OF YOUNG MIGRANTS**  
*(Rapporteurs: Mr Doros CHRISTODOULIDES, Cyprus, and Ms Maria SEREDA, Ryazan School of Human Rights, Russia)*  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mrs Terezija STOISITS, Austria,  
Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migration  
Ms Elvira KALMÁR, Association for Migrants, Hungary  
**Introduction**  
Mr Hasan HABIB, The Finnish Youth Co-operation Alliansi  
**Discussion Panel**  
(Youth representatives and Parliamentarians)
- 14.30      **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**  
*(Rapporteurs: Mr Jean-Guy BRANGER, France, and Mr Badri AHMED, Stop la Violence, France)*  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mr Boriss CILEVIČS, Latvia  
Mr Azer BAYRAMOV, Youth Development Organisation, Azerbaijan  
**Introduction**  
Ms Adene Thuy Duong VO, LNU, National Youth Council of Norway  
**Discussion Panel**  
(Youth representatives and Parliamentarians)
- 16.30      **RACISM, VIOLENCE, INTOLERANCE AND TERRORISM**  
*(Rapporteurs: Mr Sergejus DMITRIJEVAS, Lithuania, and Ms Noemi ALARCON, University of Malaga, Spain)*

### *Co-Chairs*

Mr Agustín DÍAZ DE MERA, Spain  
Ms Xenia MARQUES, Portuguese Network of Young People for Equality

### **Introduction**

Mr Ronni ABERGEL, Danish Crime Prevention Council, Founding  
Member of „Stop the Violence“, Denmark

### **Discussion Panel**

(Youth representatives and Parliamentarians)

### END OF THE SITTING

- 19.30      Visit to the Hungarian Parliament followed by a reception given by the Hungarian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre Budapest

#### FRIDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2001

- 09.00      **TRAFFICKING OF HUMAN BEINGS**  
*(Rapporteurs: Mr Marc HORDIES, Belgium, and Mr Robert KASO, “Europe“ Student Association, Ukraine)*  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mr Atilla MUTMAN, Turkey  
Ms Sonia AIMIUMI, Centro Interculturale della Almaterra, Italy  
**Introduction**  
Mr Bruno MOENS, vzw PAYOKE, Belgium  
Ms Argentina SZABADOS, Chief of Mission with Regional Functions IOM Budapest  
**Discussion Panel**  
(Youth representatives and Parliamentarians)
- 11.30      **THE SPECIFIC SITUATION OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS**  
*(Rapporteurs: Mrs Zdravka BUŠIĆ, Croatia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, and Mr Andrei BRIGHIDIN, League for Defence of Human Rights, Moldova)*  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mr Csaba TABAJDI, Hungary  
Ms Mariam MATEVOSYAN, Youth Department of the Red Cross Society, Armenia  
**Introduction**  
Ms Mara GEORGESCU, Save the Children, Romania, Member of the Advisory Council of the European Youth Centres and European Youth Foundation  
Mr Jean-Claude FORGET, Senior Regional Legal Adviser for Central Europe, UNHCR Branch Office in Budapest  
**Discussion panel**  
(Youth representatives and Parliamentarians)
- 14.30      **CONCLUSIONS**  
*Co-Chairs*  
Mr John CONNOR, Ireland, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Migration  
Ms Antje ROTHEMUND,  
Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest

## List of participants

**PRESENTATION**  
Group of Rapporteurs

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**CLOSING OF THE HEARING**

Dr Sándor PINTÉR, Minister of the Interior, Hungary

16.30 Reception with wine-tasting, hosted by KABA GALLEN SCHÜTZ GmbH

16.30-17.30 **MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION**

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL  
OF EUROPE**

*Members and alternates of the Sub-Committee on  
Migration*

**John CONNOR**  
Ireland

**Terezija STOISITS**  
Austria

**Jean-Guy M. BRANGER**  
France

**Zdravka BUŠIĆ**  
Croatia

**Doros CHRISTODOULIDES**  
Cyprus

**Boriss Mr CILEVIČS**  
Latvia

**Franco M. DANIELI**  
Italy

**Agustín M. DÍAZ DE MERA**  
Spain

**Sergejus DMITRIJEVAS**  
Lithuania

**Adolfo FERNÁNDEZ AGUILAR**  
Spain

**Michael HANCOCK**  
United Kingdom

**Atilla MUTMAN**  
Turkey

**Pasquale NESSA**  
Italy

**Csaba TABAJDI**  
Hungary

**Clemencia TORRADO**  
Spain

**John WILKINSON**  
United Kingdom

**Mr. Luis YÁÑEZ-BARNUEVO**  
Spain

*Members and alternates of the Committee on  
Migration, Refugees and Demography*

**Mykola GABER**  
Ukraine

**Marc HORDIES**  
Belgium

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